The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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CATHOLICISM AND COMMUNISM

ACCORDING to the most influential mouthpiece of liberal, interdenominational Protestantism in the United States, the *Christian Century*, of Chicago, the Catholic Church is conducting a world-wide campaign against Communism principally because the Holy See is really concerned with supporting Fascism, "with its inevitable accompaniments of autocracy and brutality, and for the special privileges which the Roman Catholic Church is able to enjoy under Fascist governments." Therefore, the *Christian Century* strongly, or at least vehemently, urges "all good Americans, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish, to stay out of the Vatican campaign."

On the other hand, *Der Angriff*, the chief mouthpiece of the Nazi party, edited by Dr. Joseph Goebbels, its minister of propaganda, declares that Cardinal Pacelli's recent visit to the United States was part of a scheme to set up a "Catholic Center party" here to prevent the spread of National Socialist doctrines, and that President Roosevelt's return to the White House is that of "one anointed by the Vatican." But the organs of the Communist press support the theory that the Papal Secretary of State came here in order to combat the Communists' international program.

American Catholics, of course, will not turn to any of the above-named sources of opinion in order to be instructed as to the part they should take, either as Catholics, or as citizens, in the campaign against Communism. They must regret the fantastic views of the *Christian Century*, however, for it would be most deplorable if such views should greatly influence American Protestants, and hamper the growing conditions of cooperation between Catholics, Protestants and Jews which of late years have become so cordial.

What, in broad outline, is the real position of the Church, in which American Catholics must play their part, in this most important matter?

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In the first place, American Catholics know that the Church condemns Communism from religious, not from political, motives. As the Vatican City correspondent of the National Catholic Welfare Conference News Service recently, and authoritatively, stated the case, "The Holy See has wished always, and especially of late, to call universal attention to the dangers and menace of Communist propaganda." And several instances are given of past utterances to that effect; indeed, they go back many years. Little attention, however, was paid by the secular press to these warnings, until the outbreak in Spain. "The Holy See," the correspondent continues, "desires that all of the episcopate, the clergy, the faithful members of Catholic Action—and not only Catholics but all wise people of good-will—may realize the seriousness of this menace and do what each one can, in his sphere, to meet Communist propaganda and to promote that social welfare which Communism promises in vain and which is possible only through Christian justice and charity. The Vatican is always delighted with the favorable reactions to the Holy Father's call, noted in many quarters, and desires that the whole of the intelligent, believing, honest world may gather all of its forces to stop the march of Communism."

Fortunately for American Catholics, they have for their instruction and guidance not only the basic teaching of the Head of the Church, defining the religious nature of the struggle against Communism, but also there is the steady, continuous teaching and leadership of the American bishops, and the clergy, which for many years have proceeded in a double stream of action. We do not think—we wish we could—that this instruction and this practical application of the doctrine of the Church have been heeded nearly as completely as the bishops desire. There has been a great mass of stolid indifference among the Catholic laity, and a portion of the clergy as well, to contend with. But the record of the great efforts made by the episcopate, and those appointed by the episcopate, is clear and unquestionable. The leaders of the Church in the United States have contended against Communism, not as blind reactionaries, still less as the champions of any form of dictatorial political force, but as Christian social reformers, and, as Americans, always within the American system of democracy and liberty. The bishops' joint pastoral letter of 1919—which expressed the essence of the Church's social doctrines—was the foundation of American Catholic Action. The suggestions made by a special committee of the bishops in their "Reconstruction Program" gave the movement strong impetus in highly practical directions. The formation of the National Catholic Industrial Conferences, which have extended the Catholic teachings from coast to coast, is a sufficient answer to any charges that the Church in the United States has confined itself to denouncing Communism without trying to rid the nation of those evil conditions which are the breeding grounds of Communism.

No; the *Christian Century* is wrong when it charges that the Catholic Church by opposing Communism favors Fascism against democracy. Father Parsons, S. J., declared in a recent lecture at the Centre Club in New York that these charges are made principally by Left-wing groups who are trying to involve the United States in the threatened European war. We do not say that the *Christian Century* is such a group, but we do say that its reckless charges play the game of those more active Left-wing groups which are seeking to have the United States support the so-called Peoples' Front governments in Spain and France, allegedly, as Father Parsons said, "in defense of democracy." And he is right when he adds:

"The slogan, 'Join with Communism against Fascism to save democracy,' is a false issue. Russia is not, and never can be, as long as she is Communist, democratic. The two ideas are diametrically opposed to each other. The accusation that Catholics are allied with Fascism is just as false. Because we hate Communism more than we do Fascism, it does not follow that we like Fascism. The issue today is not between Fascism and Communism; it is between democracy and all forms of totalitarianism, including Communism. It is true that Fascism is a reaction against Communism, but not the only one. As a matter of fact, if there were no Communism there would be no Fascism. The best way to be sure that Fascism does not come is to make sure there is no Communism. Fascism arises only where there is a threat from Communism. The policy we should follow, therefore, as Catholics and Americans, is to renew our allegiance to peace and democracy. With these two we cannot go wrong. But the Popular Front would drive us into war, and hand the world over to Communism. That is the reason it was formed, and that is the aim it has in all its policies in France, Spain and the United States."

Week by Week

The Trend of Events

WILL the trend be toward further liberalization of the American social structure? To date the President has said little to indicate the nature of his plans. It would, indeed, almost seem as if the administration had decided, in view of the tangled and critical situation abroad, to expend considerable energy on bolstering the immediate defenses of the nation. Politically speaking our relations with Latin America have been taken out of the realm

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of potential conflict into the domain of possible cooperation—a goal toward which the State Department has been moving for a long time. Whether all this means improved trade and credit relations remains, of course, to be seen. One assumes that the next moves will be a better understanding with Canada, and possibly some effort to influence trends in Mexico. The departure of Trotsky to the land of the Montezumas has not generally been taken seriously by the press; and yet one can hardly doubt that the event has had its effect upon official thinking. Communism is far from constituting a real menace here as yet, but the indications are clear that major efforts to organize labor and stress important demands are certain to be made. The question is not merely how far Mr. Lewis will succeed in amalgamating workers in important key industries. It is surely also one of the methods employers will use to fight back. If the situation is not adroitly and effectively handled, there may be more signs and portents of radicalism than it will be comfortable to contemplate. It is our feeling that Mr. Roosevelt will await developments so as to be ready for the crucial tasks of mediation.

MISSAL words of prayer for the Holy Father have a special meaning for Catholics these days. At first the news concerning Pope Pius's health did not seem particularly alarming. A man almost eighty cannot avoid spells of feebleness, or times when the knocking at the door of human mortality grows very loud. But we had all confidently hoped the trouble might not be serious. More recent dispatches indicate, alas, the presence of stubborn and weakening illness. The Christmas feast found His Holiness too weak to do more than receive occasional visitors. For the first time in seventeen years, there is to be no allocution in honor of the Nativity. Work, of which the Pope has always been fond, has been curtailed to the minimum. Under the circumstances, who among Christians will have failed to include this truly "grand old man" in his remembrance? Looking back over the past years, one realizes almost with a start that the Pope who succeeded Benedict XV was more than sixty. At a time of life when nearly everyone seeks quiet and tries to withdraw a little from the pressure of affairs, this Sovereign Pontiff who had been a dogged scholar and a mountain climber began to assume the most difficult executive task in the world. He proved himself a veritable dynamo. Extraordinarily much done during this pontificate bears a personal stamp. The Pope developed his own point of view, sponsored projects he especially cherished, issued an unusual number of far-reaching encyclicals, and appeared at an almost endless series of functions. Peril was around him constantly. Hardly had peace been restored in one portion of a world-wide religious domain than conflict began somewhere else. In all truth, this is a remarkable story of energy, sacrifice and devotion.

News from Rome

FASCISM is a terrible thing for Fascist countries and a threat to the peace of the world. "The essential division in the world today" is not, however, "between the Fascist dictatorships and the democracies," as pretend the Communist International and the *New Republic*. This present line of the C. I. is as great a threat to international peace as any policy of the Fascists, even if it is easier on internal peace than its more primitive idea. The remarkable statement in the December 23 *New Republic* that "the democracies [including Russia] differ widely in their principles and practises, but the gulf between any two of them is far less wide than the gulf between all of them and such powers as the governments of Germany, Japan and Italy," would be pleasant to read in a natural environment. It would mean that the author recognized that Communism is not the most important thing in life, and that he had advanced so far as to repudiate Marx and Lenin and realize that property relationships are not the fundamental—or essential—touchstones of societies. Under the circumstances, however, the pleasure is too well compensated. The C. I. exists now primarily to rally France, England and the United States to the support of Russia. This would not be terrifying if it were all, but it is not support for support's sake. The C. I. gives every impression (through the writings and speeches of those in league, at least of sympathy, with it) of wanting to have Germany attacked by these "Great Democracies." It stirs up hate as passionately as it possibly can against the whole German people, making straight the path of war. The good-will of its comrades has strangely gone astray, as moral passion always does in such heresy. It is very hard to condemn a governmental régime without condemning a whole people and every individual one of them. This we try to do. But to Stalinists, it seems that Germany is to be crushed, with no regard for the class revolution—happily—and certainly no regard for peace of the world or charity to the particular German. Leagues "against war and Fascism" become leagues for the advancement of war against Fascism. The way to eliminate Fascism isn't to go to war against it. The way to eliminate Communism isn't to go to war against it. It will be a sorry day if Americans are persuaded that one more war to end some threat of war or other immorality is what's needed. It will be a sorry day if they become inoculated with the pious hate of the *New Republic* and grow conditioned to the proposition that it would be only human to ally

Up War!

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themselves with hard state Socialists, careless social democrats, and fools, to kill off Fascist armies.

Stressing Fundamentals

OUR DISCUSSIONS of social improvement are fruitful. When one thinks back some years to the time when this periodical first commenced to appear, the improvement in public opinion seems in certain respects amazing. In those days discussion of peace lulled many persons to sleep; and it was so generally assumed that the best of all ages had dawned that comment on fundamental economic situations elicited the interest of very few. Now it occasionally seems as if the pendulum had swung a little too far the other way. So convinced are people of the righteousness of this or that goal that they fail to weigh carefully the means of transportation. From each star of social justice there dangle any number of little wagons, most of them quite precariously hitched. One notices especially the haphazard manner in which words like "capitalism" and "Communism" are bandied about. The business of applying either label to something one happens not to like requires little effort and is — perhaps for that reason — very popular. It is hardly, in like manner, apposite to declare that the Catholic point of view repudiates both. For the Catholic "point of view" on such matters, guided as it is by papal and episcopal manifestos, proceeds from a realistic tradition identified with the great masters of philosophical and theological enquiry during ages past. And any system of positive and negative words is basically too nominalistic to fit in with that tradition.

WHAT should interest us most is the objective industrial or economic reality which is mankind's to use for certain purposes. Capitalism and Communism are two theories about that reality. Each is now a kind of much elaborated essay, the first draft of which was written long ago and the addenda to which have come from any number of people. Both may be partly right, as descriptions; and there is no doubt that Catholic investigation, acting in accordance with Thomistic eclecticism, has learned from both. But neither is the underlying reality. Each is powerless to alter basic cosmic verities which issue from the creative fiat and not from the desire of man. Capitalism and Communism do, however, change men. Since both of them are secularist products, issuing from times and situations divorced from organic Christian solidarity, they render men secular. And making them secular—which is just another way of making them natural only—means making them warlike and predatory, in accordance with the maxim of self-preservation. The totalitarian capitalist is an individual on the war path; the Marxist totalitarian is a worker on the war path. It is this that arouses the opposition of the Church, which reposes upon harmony: harmony between man and God, between man and man, and between man and nature in the spirit of acceptance for the sake of the pursuit of perfection.

One Last Word

THERE is little to be gained from speculating further on the personal aspects of Edward's abdication; save for one, which bears upon the larger question of constitutional monarchy. The morality of the ruler's position has been questioned, not only in regard to his proposed marriage (which we are not discussing), but in regard to his alleged duty to remain on the throne. It is profitable to consider whether this is fair, in view of what the present crisis has made clear; whether the benefits of liberal democracy, which so evidently lent stability to the British government in the last weeks, do not entail a cost to the ruler which exempts him from these strictures. The English monarchy is perhaps the most difficult office in the world, because of its peculiar nature. It is, by definition, the focus of all the anxieties and responsibilities of the world's greatest commonwealth; yet the monarch, who must receive this constant and overwhelming pressure from without, is explicitly forbidden to react to it in any adequate sense from within. He serves his people precisely by being such a receiving station. We believe that the logical and legal aspects of this fact were argued by Catholic authorities in England recently, when they said that since the kingship had no independent power, the king in justice should be allowed the same legal marriage privileges as his subjects. But it is the psychological aspect which we would stress here. To some men—indeed, to all but a few very specially constituted men—that aspect would be so devastating as simply to destroy them. There is a law of the human mind requiring that counteraction from within shall balance impact from without. Edward is apparently nervously organized, forthright, individual and strongly prompted to "do things," especially when his compassion is aroused. He came to the throne at a time when "divinity" no longer "hedged a king," supplying an unanalyzed but powerful support to the kingly relation with the people; he has evidently the support of no personal religion. It is arguable, we think, that the crisis just past has been growing since his birth, and that in time almost anything might have precipitated it—perhaps more tragically. It is arguable, too, that the temperamental exigency is so great as to remove the matter from the field of strict duty. We are not making a case for striking off the bars and limits from a king—those bars and limits have an excellent historical reason for being. We are pointing out that this case shows clearly just what they involve.

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AN ALARMIST SPEAKS

By E. HAROLD SMITH

Some readers may say of the following paper that it belongs in a journal circulating privately or only among the clergy. That view would not be wholly unjustified. But the present condition of public opinion generally being what it is, we believe that these opinions of a representative priest can dissuade not a few from an all too prevalent assumption that the Church has grown complacent. Others it may stimulate to thought and action corroborative of Christian convictions.—The Editors.

MORE than a quarter of a century ago Charles Devas published his book, "The Key to the World's Progress." In the chapter in which the author treats of the paradox of scandals and sanctity in the Church occur these words: "She [the Church] must journey through the centuries bearing as the heaviest of her trials and the greatest hindrance to her success, the daily shame of her unworthy members and be well content if she can save at their death those who have been a disgrace to her during their life." This is the expression of an undeniable fact. In the last one hundred and fifty years, however, the reactionary policies of many Catholics in both the political and social spheres have added to the weight of the trials under which the Church has been forced to labor. Too frequently, in so-called Catholic countries particularly, have the supporters of the Church and the supporters of every doomed monarchy and outworn social and economic system been one and the same. This has been doubly tragic.

It has been tragic for the particular Church in these countries because it has robbed her of the allegiance and leadership of the poor and the working class—the very people among whom she was founded and whose care is her special trust. Secondly, this reactionary attitude on the part of so many of her members has been a stumbling block to the progress of the Church throughout the world. The Church, it has been made to appear, is for good or ill irrevocably bound up with the past and the political and economic systems of the past. Patriotism may be the last refuge of the scoundrel. For many years now the Catholic Church has been the last refuge of the misguided followers of weak monarchs and of those keeping watch at the death-bed of dying social systems. To the poor and the workers in these countries the Church has come to be regarded as a vested interest, her bishops landed grandees, and her work to minister to the spiritual needs of those who, because they have the means to support her, have also the power to control her. For socially minded and progressive citizens in any country, therefore, to look to the Church for aid or guidance in laying the foundations of a more just social order, have been made to appear absurd.

If this state of affairs should have come about because the Church had not been blessed in this particular period with far-seeing leaders, it would be sad but intelligible. On the contrary, it has come about during the years in which we have had as Popes men who were veritable prophets in their vision. The *ecclesia docens* has fulfilled its duty; the *ecclesia discens* has been found wanting.

If we had followed the social program that was ours, we should be today in the vanguard of the social movement, instead of battling in many places for our very lives, with the doubtful help of Fascist and reactionary allies. One of the unfortunate sequels of this condition is that most people never advert to the fact that if Catholics are unprogressive, it is in spite of the teachings of their Church and not because of them. This is my thesis. Now let me present the proof.

Our first witness will be France, "eldest daughter of the Church." The crying abuses that existed at the time of the French Revolution are well known. That justice could have been obtained under the monarchy as constituted is extremely doubtful. When the royal power had been abolished, did those who had been the beneficiaries of the old régime submit to the inevitable and labor to form a government that would assure to all its citizens justice and liberty, and to the Church freedom of action? We know they did not. Bishops as well as nobles conspired for the return of the kings. From this, one would surmise that the Church must have been in a very flourishing condition and the French monarchs exemplary Catholics. Alas for surmises, they must bow before facts. The French bishops had been royal appointees; they lived in luxury with little concern for their flocks. The French curés, on the other hand, like their people, lived in poverty. Louis XIV and Louis XV hardly flattered the Christian name and the royal palace bore more resemblance to a Turkish seraglio than to a Christian court. It was the custom of Louis XIV to drive abroad with his wife and two mistresses. His subjects, if they peered into the royal coach, were afforded the edifying spectacle of seeing their King and the "three Queens." When Mass was celebrated in the Royal Chapel the courtiers were instructed to face the King instead of the altar.

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If this is not gross irreverence to the Holy of Holies and a mockery of religion, then I know not how to describe it; yet loyal Catholics sighed and labored for the return of the royal power.

In 1892, Leo XIII wrote to the French Catholics, beseeching them to accept the government of the third Republic since it was the choice of the French people. He pointed out to them their duty to take their part in the elections and the framing of laws that would protect them and their Church. So little attention was paid to this admonition of the Pope's, and so completely aloof did French Catholics keep themselves from the political life of their country, that in 1905 a Masonic government, the minority's choice, was able to exile the religious teachers from France.

My second witness is Spain. As this is being written that unhappy land is being torn with civil strife and drenched in the blood of its children. Since 1492, Spain has been Christian and Catholic. Its culture and its background are solely Catholic. Protestantism never gained a foothold there. Despite these facts, the contributor of May-day thoughts in the *Colosseum* can write: "Nobody seems very surprised that churches have again been sacked in Spain and mobs have broken loose in many towns." This is the work of Communists with their diabolical hatred of the Church, you say. To be sure it is. This is part of the explanation but only a part. "What we have got to explain" (continues the *Colosseum*) "is why the view that the Church is bound up with the interests of the rich is so widely held by the working class in Europe. In the eyes of many, if not most, intelligent workers, the idea that Catholicism could possibly be mentioned in the same breath as 'working class' interests seems laughable." The question is: Why have the Communists been able to persuade the Spanish laborer in whose veins flows the blood of a Catholic ancestry reaching back to Columbus or further, that the Church of his forefathers is the great obstacle to his social betterment? Why have they been able to arm this same Spaniard to fight against the bishops and priests of that Church as his deadly enemies? The answer would seem to be because the worker in Spain had been gradually coming to the same conclusion himself.

In 1891, Leo XIII wrote: "Neither must it be supposed that the solicitude of the Church is so preoccupied with the spiritual concerns of her children as to neglect their temporal and earthly welfare." Does anyone suppose for a moment that the pulpits of Spain resounded with this teaching? The "Rerum Novarum" demanded a living wage for the worker; the "Quadragesimo Anno" has gone further and insists that workingmen receive a just wage. How reconcile this, the undisputed teaching of the Catholic Church, with the mere pittance the Spanish laborer was receiving for his work? "The law therefore should favor ownership" (to quote again from Leo XIII's "Rerum Novarum") "and its policy should be to induce as many as possible to become owners." An American priest who studied conditions at first hand in Spain for three years informed me that there was a time within the last twenty years when seven men controlled every acre in Spain. This is the manner in which Spain approximated to the ideal of the Church it supported and whose teachings it professed to accept.

Many non-Catholics are of the opinion that Catholics throughout the world strive for a state-supported Church. I venture to say, if one t the long view of the matter, the Church has lost much more than it has gained by this arrangement. Dr. Halliday Sutherland, the Scottish convert physician, relates his experience in Spain even before the downfall of the monarchy. A Spanish secular priest informed Dr. Sutherland that he would welcome a change of conditions. Since this particular priest had no entrée to the officials who made appointments to ecclesiastical benefices, he was forced to live and work as a layman in order to earn his living. There were numbers of priests, he asserted, in a similar condition.

It is evident that the Church in Spain had ceased for some years to be a vital factor in the lives of the working classes. Since it was maintained by the State, it came to be looked upon as just another department of the State. Its interests and its policies were regarded as those of the ruling powers and, sad to relate, very often this would seem to be true. Thus we had the anomalous situation in which the wealthy Spaniard, Catholic but socially blind, prepared the ground for the Communists to sow the seed of a revolt that threatens to engulf the Spanish Catholics and ruin their country.

What has happened in France and Spain you say cannot happen here. Perhaps not in exactly the same way. Still, we must not be too confident, danger lies ahead. Our magnificent churches, splendid schools, orphanages, convents, academies, etc., dot the land. It must not be thought, however, that there is no weak point in the armor of American Catholicism. We have always had among us eloquent heralds of our successes. It will not harm us and may do us good to consider how we have failed. Just among ourselves, a smug complacency is not unknown even here in America.

First and foremost, as in every country, there is the labor question. It must be admitted that there is not the cleavage here between the Church and the working class that one finds in Europe. In other words: there, the Church has lost the working class; in the United States, she has not lost them—as yet. There is very little of a concrete and practical nature even here to which one can

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point as the accomplishment of Catholics for social justice. Even if it be true that we have been no more conservative or reactionary in this matter than any other group of our fellow citizens, we are, nevertheless, more blameworthy. We have had, since 1891, the principles of the Gospel applied to modern conditions with the injunction to put them into effect. Yet a pagan industrialism still flourishes in our midst. There are now between 18,000,000 and 20,000,000 Catholics in the United States. It would seem that in the forty years between the encyclical of Leo XIII and that of Pius XI, we should have made some impress on the social abuses rampant. Father Haas affirms that in 1929, the height of our prosperity, 40 percent of our working population lived beneath the subsistence level. A good portion of these, furthermore, must have been Catholic families, because we are and we always shall be (except in the measure that we depart from the teaching of Jesus Christ) the poor man's Church. Will anyone insist that even the knowledge, much less the practise of the principles of social justice has become widely diffused among the laity? Even our better-educated Catholics, for the most part until very recently would not have been able to distinguish a quotation from Leo XIII's social teaching from one of Karl Marx's.

The school enrolment in September and the latest vital statistics indicate that there has been a marked falling-off in the birth rate. Of course, we have known for some time that this would eventually happen. Several factors no doubt have concurred in causing this condition. Artificial birth control is one of them. Dare we say that this sinful practise has made no inroads among Catholics? The birth control clinics maintain (if one can accept their figures as accurate) that in the cities one-third of the women seeking information from them are Catholic women. If this be true there are that number of Catholics who are living cut off from the sacramental life of the Church.

The teaching of the Church in this matter is clear and well known. It cannot be changed, for it is based on the natural law. The problem, however, which we face is this: how can a worker who is already living below the subsistence level afford the exorbitant fees that the birth of another child will entail and the added expense of its rearing? Abstinence can be and frequently is inculcated. Still we know full well that this cannot be the normal mode of life. If most men and women were attracted to this manner of living, their vocation generally speaking would be in a monastery or religious community. This again we know God never intended because if the majority were to become religious then there would come a time when there would be no religious. What are we doing to meet this enemy of birth and life more deadly perhaps than Communism? Is it not true (as at least two Catholic writers abreast of the times have proved conclusively), especially in the larger centers, that Catholics, for economic reasons, are given their choice of practising heroic virtue or of ceasing to be practical Catholics? What ought we to do? I am sure I do not know the whole answer, but I do not see how we can bury our heads like ostriches and refuse to meet the problem without proving recreant to our duty as the upholders of Catholicism in this day and age. I have a notion that we should be in a more secure position today if we had built fewer colleges and more maternity hospitals to receive the workers' wives for a small fee or, in some cases, no fee at all.

"The foregoing is the ranting of an alarmist." This will be the verdict of some who may read this. Even so, has time always proved the alarmists wrong and the purveyors of the doctrine that all is sweetness and light to be the truthworthy prophets? Then, too, as always happens when our more conservative co-religionists are piqued, they will ask, "What are you doing? What concrete program can you offer?" The purpose of this article, you will recall, was to prove a thesis, not to offer a solution. It is to be hoped that the thesis has been proved, although much evidence remains that could be adduced. The solution, furthermore, will require the combined energy of clergy and laity. This is what our Holy Father means by Catholic Action. Still there are a few measures that suggest themselves that we might enumerate for what they are worth.

In the first place, it would seem at this late date we ought to be willing to face facts. Let the truth be told. This was the ideal that Leo XIII set for historical writing. Unfortunately, not all Catholic writers and editors have been sufficiently imbued with this spirit. They will suppress evidence for fear of giving scandal or causing harm. It is and always has been a mistaken course. *Deus non eget mendacio.* It is time we realized that the virtue of charity does not require us to enfold in a panoply of silence the conditions that obtain in Latin countries. Our duty is to tell the truth and the whole truth.

Surely, we must act speedily. The Holy Father warned us in 1931 of a revolution that was brewing. Spain did not heed the warning. Shall we never learn from the history of the Church in other countries? It is not the Church or the Church's teaching in any country that has failed the workingman. It is we Catholics here and elsewhere who have failed the Church. We ought to confess openly our failures and amend our ways. This confession we must make for ourselves. If we delay too long other hands may be outstretched to help us with the amendment, but they will not be the hands of friends.

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A STRANGE REFLECTION

By PALUEL J. FLAGG

FANCY may serve to embellish little truths. Great truths shed their own illumination. Test the theory for yourself. She is beautiful, he is learned—each demands qualifications. He is dead. She lives, fills and satisfies the mind. I wish to make this distinction clear for in what I am about to write, experience came first, the explanation followed. Four years ago, I was struck by a thought and a question. As usual, I tried to answer the question by elaborating the thought. Both have lain at rest during the interval. Within the month, my notes have turned up. The message was there, the obligation to revamp, to release. The message, the thought that I had elaborated, thrilled me anew. My secretary grew misty eyed as I dictated the copy. She felt the message. A truth was there, we must strive to make it known. We must not obscure it by a blundering or careless presentation.

While the first draught carried the message, parts were a bit out of focus, perhaps they might be clarified and strengthened. Calling upon my masters, I borrowed lines from the "Dream of Gerontius," from the "Paradiso," and slipped them neatly into place. "But," I cried when my task was finished, "the light is dimmed." I had obscured it by my feeble effort to illuminate it, by bringing it down to my own level. These are great truths, not little ones. They are fundamental, like life, like death. I can add nothing to them. My duty is to hold them aloft for all to see. And so—begging the readers' pardon for what lack of grace my effort shall entail — I present: "A Strange Reflection."

* * *

My grandfather was a typical country practitioner of the last half of the nineteenth century. Devoted to his profession, to his patients, and to his family, he represented all that was cultural, social and scientific in his time. His ethics were of the highest and his self-sacrifice when he was called upon to attend the sick at all times of the day and night, in snow and sleet and zero weather, left nothing to be desired. The life which he led was an example which I felt I might well emulate, achieving thereby the respect, the admiration and the fame within the gift of the community. That my appreciation of my grandfather was based upon more than mere tradition is attested by a reference to the "History of Westchester County" written by one J. Thomas Scharf, published by L. E. Preston and Company at Philadelphia in 1886. Referring to the brief history contained in this volume, I found that my forebear had been born in West Hartford on February 14, 1817, that he had graduated from Yale in the Class of 1839, and from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1847. He had studied with Dr. Willard Parker. According to his biographer, my grandfather

> . . . rapidly grew in favor with the community, acquiring wealth and an eminent position among the physicians of the locality. He devoted himself wholly to his profession in which he was a zealous and untiring worker. One of the most popular and successful physicians as well as a most useful and upright citizen that it has ever been the good fortune of Westchester County to possess. *No one was or could be better known than he* [italics mine]. By his steadfast integrity, his professional ability and genial and winning manner, he won for himself the respect of the business community, an extensive and lucrative practise, and a high social standing. His death on May 15, 1884, not only created a vacancy beside the family hearth, but he was also a loss to the city and county in which he lived, which is irreparable.

His son, my uncle, responded to the ideal environment in which he was reared and became as popular and as successful as his father. Dying in 1898, his memory added laurels to the family name.

Convinced of the respect, the admiration and the love which I felt had become too deep rooted in the community to become greatly dimmed in the brief span of thirty-five years, I planned to prepare a biography of my ancestors, constructed from anecdotes and memories furnished by those of their patients who had survived. Having been active obstetricians, many babies delivered by my grandfather and my uncle were still alive and might, if they so fancied, furnish interesting comments and affectionate reminiscence. An appeal was therefore published by the local newspaper to the effect that such material was desired and would form a fitting tribute to those whom it was intended to memorialize.

Replies were awaited. None was received. A second attempt to enlist the tribute of a community to its beloved citizens was ignored by the publication. I should have been pleased to receive two or three acknowledgments. Just a few words of gratitude for charity and kindnesses performed by these men who in their time were referred to as "saintly" by reason of their many charitable acts. Half a dozen letters would have occasioned quite a flurry, twenty-five would have been a sensation and one hundred would have been quite unthinkable; and yet, not one came. Not a single tribute

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was paid by the locality in which these men had been leaders, exemplary in conduct and successful to a degree. An old acquaintance agreed to seek references to the work of my forebears in contemporary publications, perhaps an assortment of clippings might illuminate these lives which had passed so rapidly into the dust from which they had come. Some slight record outside of the family collection. Perhaps a bust, an oil, perhaps a few lines of poetry remained to immortalize my heroes. If they exist, they are lost, and cannot be found. Something was wrong, desperately wrong. What had happened? Were these lives, so well spent, gone forever, not even a memory left?

And then a thought gradually dawned: It was borne in upon me that the world perhaps did have ideals, ideals of a higher order, that it did really respond to something more than the natural virtues, prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, integrity and professional ability. These things were taken for granted and forgotten in the passing. With all that I could do, I could not even awaken the memory of such natural virtues. In accordance with their nature, these things were dead. The world would have something alive to applaud—something that did not die. What was this life, this form of activity which did not die? And how was it achieved?

The answer came from across the sea. It came from a little town in Normandy.

While my grandfather and uncle were practising their profession, known and esteemed by rich and poor, a little girl was born in Alençon, and grew into her teens in the secluded Norman town of Lisieux. Brought up amid the culture and the refinement of a typical French family of means, she was known to few outside her family circle. Before she was quite matured, she entered a cloistered community where her contact with the world was reduced to practically nothing at all. This young lady was, from the ordinary point of view, as thoroughly, completely and permanently buried as it was possible for a living mortal. She saw no one outside of her own immediate community. Indeed, the chance that the notification of her death would become generally known was very remote.

To add to this privacy, seclusion and otherworldliness, the spirit by which this young lady conducted her life was absolute and complete effacement of self. Her whole life, her whole being was spent upon a full, unreserved, spontaneous and all-absorbing love of others. And yet, having died in obscurity, her memory issuing from this quiet retreat has filled the whole world with its fragrance. Something came out of Lisieux which brought the world to her feet. The poor, the rich, the learned and the illiterate, all classes and ages of persons look upon her as a living force, rather than as a dead memory.

Her death took place a year before my uncle's. His death was a shock to the entire community. Natural affection and respect was expressed in a thousand homes. Her death, the awaited death of an invalid, was known to few. She left behind her a few pages of manuscript, "The History of a Soul," her own autobiography prepared in obedience to the command of her Superior. What she had to say was private, quite intimate, by no means intended for strange eyes, for she begins:

> This, Reverend Mother, is the story of my soul. When you asked me to write it, I feared it might unsettle me, but now I feel that I shall please Jesus best by simple obedience.

And yet, as she proceeds, the subject seems of so little importance to her that she writes:

> I thought I had written enough but now, dearest Mother, you want me to give you more details about my life in religion. Well, I am not going to argue, but it makes me smile when I again take pen in hand to write what you know about as well as I. I obey without question as to the use of this manuscript, but really, should you burn it in my presence without reading it—what difference will it make?

Obedience, detachment, selflessness, admirable qualities but not unique. Immortality has not sprung from their roots. But suddenly the objective comes into view.

> I have always longed to be a saint, but alas I am in comparison with them what a grain of sand, trodden under foot, is to a lofty mountain. . . . I am convinced that God would not inspire me with such a desire, if it could not be gratified. Little though I am, I may still hope. . . . I want to get to heaven by a short cut, by a new way.

The short cut is revealed. It is a path, through the forest of philosophy, faintly marked by the imprints of little children's feet. "Eternal wisdom says, whosoever is so very little, let him come unto Me." The steady light of wisdom illumines this "new way." Nor is it all solemn; there is a merry humor which gives zest to her steps. Describing her visit to the Bishop:

> I unhesitatingly plumped myself into the great seat and had the mortification of seeing him take a common chair while I was lost in an immense piece of furniture, where four girls like myself, might have sat at ease . . . though I was not at my ease at all.

Again, we are charmed by priceless innocence in action:

> I was aware that on our way I should meet with many things that might disturb my soul and being unaware of the nature of evil, I was afraid to discover it, but I did not know then that to the pure all things are pure, and that the simple and upright mind sees no harm anywhere, for evil enters only in impure hearts and not in inanimate objects.

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This is no docile soul, a high spirit and fearlessness indicate the interior struggle, as in her ardent desire to enter Carmel despite her tender age:

> Abbé Reverony, however, who stood at the Pope's right hand, told us very distinctly that he forbade any appeal to the Holy Father. I looked at Céline for counsel. My heart was beating violently. She whispered, "Speak." I raised my eyes wet with tears and said, "Holy Father, I have a great favor to ask of you."

How clearly she indicates her mission, the technique of her labor:

> We on Carmel are called upon to preserve the salt of the earth, and to be the Apostles of the Apostles, themselves, and doing penance for them while their words and examples lead the souls of men to God.

As children linger on their way gathering flowers and crimson berries for a gift, her gift was an endless succession of efforts for others—bound up with physical weakness and pain. She reveals for us the exquisite refinement of these acts.

> Trifling acts of kindness hidden from every eye were what I most sought. I watched for opportunities to render service to my sisters. Such for instance, as folding the cloaks they have left unfolded. My penance consists in breaking my will, keeping back a sharp word, doing little services without display. . . . Charity makes us bear with our neighbor's shortcomings. Look upon their weaknesses without taking offense, and admire all the good that is in their souls. . . . If we take any pride in them [our deeds] or offer up the prayer of the Pharisee, we become like one who is starving at his own abundantly spread table at which his guests eat heartily and perhaps envy the wealth of the possessor.

As we read these reflections of a pure mind and a warm heart, as we admire her high-spirited fearlessness and enjoy her humor, as we are charmed by her innocence, her wisdom and her strict sense of justice, we realize that here is an example of heroic virtue. Is this the reason for the power of this unique soul? In part. But—there is something more, the world has recognized something higher and finer than heroic virtue, something above precept, something by which it may itself be lifted up.

Through this power, we, who would prefer to starve at our bounteous table loaded with sentimental reflections, are at last constrained to act. The homesick world responds. It has grown weary of its husks and its lusts. It has experienced the misery that follows fame. It hears this voice, melodious with the music of the canticles tuned to the pitch of its own day. It turns to the call of supernatural life and clasps the little hand that would lead it safely home.

The path comes to an end. Not content with precept, with mere leadership, this soul which has led all peoples along the pathway of heroic simplicity consummates her work by an oblation of herself. She captures our love by being herself consumed by the Divine Fire. Observe her course.

> On that Blessed Christmas night, the Sweet Infant Jesus, scarce yet an hour old, flooded with His glorious sunshine the darkness into which my soul was plunged. In becoming weak, and little for love of me, He made me strong and brave. He placed His own weapons in my hands, and I went from victory to victory. . . . The fountain of my tears was dried up and from that time they flowed neither easily or often. . . . Love and a spirit of self-forgetfulness took complete possession of my heart, and thenceforth I was completely happy. I resolved to remain continuously at the foot of the cross, that I might receive the Divine dew of salvation and pour it forth upon souls. . . . I seemed to hear our Lord whispering to me as He did to the Samaritan woman, "Give Me to drink." . . . But the more I gave Him to drink, the greater became the thirst of my own poor soul, and this was indeed my most precious reward. Faith and hope had already given place to love—love which made us find, even upon earth, Him whom we sought. He gave us His kiss and now no one may despise us (cf. Canticle of Canticles, viii, 1). . . .
>
> I am a tiny bird covered with down and featherless. Nothing of the eagle is mine, save its eyes and its heart. Yet, I dare to gaze upon the sun of Divine Love, and I long to fly upward toward Him. . . .
>
> I have now discovered that my vocation is to love. I have found the place which Thou, Thyself, hast given me in the Church. Within its heart, I shall be love, and thus I shall be all.

The shadows fell early upon this precious soul. She bore the twilight hours with affectionate resignation, sealing her destiny and her sanctity in these last words: "Oh, I love Him. Oh, my God, I love Thee."

The nations' tribute to Thérèse of Lisieux is a sign. It is a sign like the Star in the East. It is glad tidings to all men of good-will.

All the world loves a lover, but when that lover is a lover of God, it loves a saint.

Winter Friends

The high cold moon rides through the frost,
The branches of the trees make lace
Along the drifted snow beneath,
There is no friendliness in the place,
Except in twelve small squares of light
Set in a house's midnight side.
Someone is awake with me
On the cold earth's wintry ride,
Through the pathways of the space,
He and I go on like friends,
Saying nothing, quietly,
To our separate unknown ends.

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN.

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MANY AMERICAN WIVES

By ALICE S. TRAMS

A MISSOURI pastor recently made the statement: "Most wives have to ask their husbands for every dollar they spend, just as children have to ask their fathers for spending money." The pastor said, of course, that such should not be the case—that marriage is a partnership, and a wife should be given a reasonable allowance to spend as her very own.

The pastor was speaking of church collections at the time and was telling his parishioners how he classed the various members of his parish, and what he expected of them in his system of regular contributions toward church expenses. Owing to this condition, of so few wives being given a personal allowance by their husbands, the pastor had been obliged to class the wives as "adult dependents" in his method of budgeting church expenses.

How many intelligent, up-to-date American men, whether in the professional, business or manual labor class, would want their wives to be referred to as "adult dependents"? Not many, I am sure. Yet, if they stop and take an inventory of the money customs in their various homes, many men will be surprised to discover that their wives have been living on that basis for years, perhaps ever since they married.

And if you were to ask these same men which they prefer—the newer, more up-to-date methods of conducting their business and the business of the world in general, or the older methods of doing things—they would all insist that they are for the more efficient and labor-saving methods of today. But they do not seem to be conscious of the fact that many of them still cling to the cave-man idea—that they own their wives body and soul. Now why make an exception of the wife? Is she of least importance of all his interests? She should hold the first and highest place. Some great writer has said: "You can judge the educational standing of a nation by the treatment accorded its women."

From the beginning of the world, women were destined to be the companions, helpmates, of men. And in no relation of life is this emphasized more than in marriage. Christ intended marriage to be a partnership in every sense of the word. Partnership implies equal rights in everything concerning a business. In this case the business happens to be marriage. This certainly proves that a wife should not be classed as an "adult dependent," not if she is to retain her self-respect.

We all admit that every home should have a head. By the very nature of things, that place of responsibility falls to man. He is (in most cases) the wage earner and is also better able physically to carry this responsibility. Women are just as capable mentally of holding the position of head of the family, but their varied duties in the home would prevent their doing justice to that position. Wives who are treated as partners and companions are glad to look up to their husbands as heads of their homes, and are proud to speak of them as such to others.

It has been said that women are the world's greatest spenders. Statistics show that women spend the major part of men's wages. A little fact that statisticians, husbands and in-laws often forget to mention is that most wives make every one of their husband's hard-earned dollars do the work of two. During the recent years of depression every woman has had to learn that trick. No doubt that is how the custom originated of telling young men who were contemplating matrimony, "It doesn't cost any more for two to live married than it costs for one to live single." Since wives are not supposed to be "wage earners," with the above facts to their credit, they are certainly entitled to the name "wage savers."

If you doubt the truth of the statement that most wives make every one of their husband's dollars do the work of two, just turn the running of your household expenses over to a servant for a month. Pardon me! I should have said maid. There are no servants. But even maids have advantages over most housewives, in that they draw regular wages which they can spend as they please; they have their evenings and one or two afternoons a week off; and greatest of all privileges, they are free to quit any time they get tired of their jobs. But why bring that up? Few of us have maids any more. Some of us never had.

Another little fact that statisticians, husbands and in-laws often fail to mention when speaking of wives' spending is that most of the money women spend is spent for man's personal wants and needs, his food, his clothes, the upkeep of his home and the expenses connected with rearing his family.

Perhaps a good way to judge how a man treats his wife in regard to money matters would be to observe how he speaks in public of things relative to his home life. If you hear him refer to them as "my home," "my house," "my car," etc., it should take but one guess to know how much the wife has to say about anything in that home. In other words, he is a Mussolini-Hitler in American disguise.

This story, like everything else, has two sides. There are, as we all know, some frivolous wives, who, if their husbands didn't keep a tight rein on

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their money, would keep their husbands bankrupt all the time. But even they are entitled to a definite personal allowance each month. If they spend it recklessly and ask for more, then is the time for friend husband to take a firm stand and say "No." Such wives deserve to be treated as children.

The best way to arrive at a just personal allowance is by way of a family budget. This, of course, is based on the husband's monthly salary. A wife's personal allowance (to spend just on little extras or pleasures for herself, out of which she could save to make a donation toward a pet charity, or a gift to a sick person, or to further some pet hobby) might range anywhere from $5 to $100 a month, depending entirely on her husband's salary. If this salary varies from month to month, her allowance would vary in the same proportion.

Many women do not object openly to being forced to ask for every dollar they spend, but any woman of intelligence resents this form of procedure, and it is bound in time to have a demoralizing effect. It is in reality depriving her of a rightful freedom. It were far better if they did resent it openly, because suppressed resentment after a period of time is likely to explode, and then—anything can happen.

It seems this might explain at least part of the divorces of couples who have lived together for thirty or forty years. You often hear the remark, when such cases appear in the divorce column, "Well, you would think if they stuck it out together that long, they could have stood it a few years longer," meaning, of course, until wife or husband died.

Some of the later life divorces may be due to a lack of companionship. After the children grow up and leave home, and the couple realize that they have nothing left in common, they may drift apart. A close companionship between husband and wife is without question the strongest factor of guarantee for a happy married life. Close companionship in time results in perfect understanding. And perfect understanding in married life should mean peace and contentment.

Personally speaking, I would rather be able to say of my life partner that he or she is a companion, a pal, than to say he or she is beautiful, rich or highly educated. Am I right? I wonder!

YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOOKS

By MARY R. WALSH

EVEN just after Christmas it seems unnecessary to take space for the remark that books have great influence. Almost every biography bears witness to it. Who does not know, for instance, that the whole beneficent Jesuit order resulted when on a certain crucial day Ignatius Loyola was forced for lack of other pastime to read a good book. To go one step further in the obvious, children's books have great influence. They help to make the foundation on which all later education is built. But need Catholics consider the matter further in the midst of really pressing problems? There must be plenty of good children's books that are pervaded with Catholic spirit.

What a comfortable assumption! If it were true we should have something to celebrate in Book Week. But the lists made from time to time by various organizations point to a less happy state of affairs. There are lists of excellent books for Catholic schools and libraries which contain very few books that are Catholic at all, and lists of recommended Catholic books that are largely made up of antiquated cumbersome fiction of the last century and mediocre school stories of today. But only of late do we begin to find a few new books to list that have a special Catholic interest.

It is worth thinking on, too, that our Catholic children do not even receive the benefit they might from the children's reading now in print. If a survey could be made on the basis of religion, it could probably be established that they grade lower on the whole than non-Catholic children in reading taste. The slow growth of our parochial school libraries is one reason; another is that the natural desire for stories of Catholic background works toward the use of inferior books written and published by Catholics. Needless to say, cheap series books are no better for having a Catholic veneer. And children can be alienated from Catholic reading by stilted and sentimental books, or even by good ones that are urged on them with that fatal argument for books or food, that they will do them good.

We need a better understanding of standards in children's reading on the part of our Catholic parents and educators, and possibly even a clearer perception of the power of books. I hear some of them protesting: "What can books do?" "We have always had books. We have more than we need!" Or: "Children waste time reading stories. We have our textbooks and catechisms." They have forgotten that neither sermons, nor drama, nor music, nor art, nor radio, nor cinema, nor any imaginable invention can rival books as an influence, because they are a permanent record of great thoughts. As to children wasting their time, they do, on worthless books—an argument for better ones.

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There is more reason of course in the contention sometimes made that schools, the sacraments and the Mass should suffice. But we have had them all and have not benefited as might have been expected. It seems evident that more fertile ground must be prepared, to bring a better crop of sturdy principles, a higher growth of Catholic ideas. And is there any better way of doing this—of encouraging great dreams in youth, of sharing the companionship of saints and heroes, of giving true historical perspectives, of making the faith a living part of the minds of countless children who will grow up to exemplify what they have fed upon—than by means of stories?

It is a humble means, but one that was not too humble for the Teacher in parables. And it must be slow. But like any other sound part of Catholic Action it fits in. It can supplement every other activity. Whether we consider the Catholic press, higher education, religious freedom or universal peace, it is inspiring to consider what may be accomplished if when the time comes that they are taken over by the children of today, they can be given into the hands of a Catholic group more intelligent than we have seen, more unified, and better equipped for the propagation of Catholic ideas.

Despite our schools and colleges, however, we shall fail to develop that intelligent leadership unless we make readers of the children who are now going to school. And catechisms and textbooks of course are a hindrance in this respect rather than a help. Booklovers are made by recreational reading. It is the book that is read for pleasure out of school, the story book with atmosphere and living characters, that will lead the children into the almost endless pleasures and rewards of reading.

We need more books written for the Catholic children of today, whether we are concerned about the great movements in the Church and the world, or whether we consider the mind and faith of any individual child. How little we are able to convey, even to the children closest to us, of our strength of conviction, renewed with every costly bit of wisdom gleaned in any field, with every tragedy and joy of our lives, as to the harmony of Catholic teaching with all that is good and beautiful. Our own flashes of perception are so fleeting. Sometimes

> . . . a trumpet sounds
> From the hid battlements of Eternity;
> Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
> Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again.

How lame and halting we are in our attempts to give evidence of the truth that is in us. The best skill of the artist in words will hardly suffice. Then the responsive state of the child has to be considered. Stories are enjoyed when sermons are merely endured.

Of course there is no implication in all this that children should read only fiction, or that Catholic children should only read Catholic books, except in the wide sense that whatever is true is Catholic. Like any others they should feed their minds on many books. Contrast the benefit received from college courses by the boy or girl who is a good reader and the one who is not. Or consider, if you like, how foolish it is to try at all to impart a cultural education to readers of light magazines and newspapers and compulsory samples of Victorian literature. At any rate, among the many books our Catholic children should read in their impressionable years when tastes are formed and impulses received that give direction to their lives, it can hardly be contested that we should make sure of a few at least for every stage of growth that will tell them in glowing terms of their Catholic heritage, what it has meant to the world, and what it can mean to them.

The new books that are needed will come only if we deserve them, that is, if we show that we want them and will pay for them—in other words, if the great Catholic market wakes up. This matter of a market has more influence on what is written than is generally understood. In writing as in any other art commercial considerations cannot be uppermost, but they have always had a great deal to do with the inception of books, even great books. Before a publisher is warranted in investing thousands of dollars in plates and other manufacturing costs of a book, there must be an assurance of thousands of purchasers, thousands not hundreds, and purchasers, not merely readers.

Generally speaking the question of priority in the case of books and readers may be as hard to settle as that of the chicken and the egg, but a demand must exist for a particular book before it can be published, either an actual demand or a potential one that will not be too costly to develop.

Without the demand there will be no publishing plan, no contract for the author, nor editorial guidance. Without such guidance and without at least a probable contract, there is little likelihood of getting good authors to work over a period of months or years, and without the gifted and experienced author, there will seldom be a fine Catholic book. The first step is a recognition of the need on the part of parents and teachers, the next is the purchase of the suitable books now in print. The demand must come from Catholic homes and schools.

"My father," said the great Saint Teresa, "was very much given to the reading of good books; and so he had them in Spanish that his children might read them. These books, with my mother's carefulness to make us say our prayers, and to bring us up devout to Our Lady and to certain saints, began to make me think seriously when I was, I believe, six or seven years old."

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THE ADMIRABLE CROTCHET

By JOHN BOON

TO BE right comes more and more into repute with us, and to be loud daily prevails less; disciplined knowledge gains to an active esteem and centrifugal passion dwindles to a passive endurance. The anarchic energy of our literature, our public organs, and our speech seems at last to have run its course.

The immediate promise is evident by such books as the indispensable Mr. Herbert's "What a Word!" and the invaluable Miss Macaulay's suaver "Personal Pleasures." That the cause is words, which have been the focus of zeal in each reforming age of letters, gives special import to the incipient agitation. What has been accomplished hitherto has usually been done by the lexicographer, not the rhetorician, and has been done with diction, not style. If, therefore, Mr. Herbert be engaged in the ranks of the honorably doomed, so much the less reproach to his standard. At any rate, the reviewers have been pretty well in accord that his is a lost cause. Purists never prosper, they claim. The case against them is stated somewhat as follows.

Words are puckish and protean; they will not be fixed but when they have fulfilled their destiny; the letter will not dominate the spirit. The words that express us expose us, but while the purist treats the symptom the disease eludes him. He will not tolerate *inalienable* as an epithet since Jefferson's manifesto first coupled *unalienable* at one end with *certain,* and at the other with *rights.* Therein he lacks imagination, for while he quibbles the world has rolled, and *certain* has itself become interchangeable with *particular.* Shall we go to his capricious extreme? Shall we meditate every man's good morning? It is an ignoble warp that comes of throttling the judgment. Whom it afflicts dwell often among the Pharisees, glorying in the embarrassments of their fellows. If the excellent drama-spectator of THE COMMONWEAL commit *wrapt* to paper instead of *rapt,* they rejoice; if Theodore Roosevelt, who would talk French to the French, be confused of tongue between *audessus* and *audessous,* they are justified; and if the dean of music commentators spend his declining years in thinking *scherzo* Teutonic, and calling it *shkerrtso,* they make merry. Similarly, chatoyant idiom offends them, trying the second of their emotions. They urge that Rare Ben knew not what he was talking about when, pledging Celia, he swore that might he of Jove's nectar sup he would not change for hers—which, they say, means that on no account would he have *her* nectar, or touch *her* lips, or in any way prefer *her!* And the contrary senses of *cull* as noun and verb are to them an indignity. A fig for (though certainly not nuts to) idiom; they will seek honor for subtlety (if not subtility). Very well, then; let Duns Scotus furnish them a lasting moral; his immortality is crystallized in the word *dunce.*

Very well indeed. But what of those who have no gift *but* imagination, whose apprehension of the world has gone unmodified since childhood, who are all ears and have no convictions, whose characteristic expression of mental countenance is a gentle imbecility? They are virgin soil in continuous bloom of every seed the wind has carried them. They are the product of every decade among the last seven which has appropriated to itself the secret of "the new freedom." They are of both sexes. Bred upon novelty, they hear only the latest and the loudest voice, and practised on sentimentality, they are moved by every movement. Knowing nothing, they speculate; unsure of themselves, they league with numbers.

The idealist is common among them, but he is always of the camp-meeting variety, and he ingests every assertion as a truth. On demand he will waive the whole content of human experience and testify a creation with each new dawn. Obediently he will stifle his every doubt that we are come to the resolution of history; that the machine has canceled the irritating system of anxious maturation and spontaneous combustion in the successive epochs; that time is delivered and we are brought where the soft road to plenty now opens for the proletariat under indefeasible and exclusive franchise. Because it is being said, he will accept the doctrine that all art is propaganda, and try valiantly to see that the dogmata of Wells and Wodehouse and Stein and Shaw are indifferently absolute. He is soon ridden by a *cacoëthes credendi,* loses all power of perspective, reduces all evil to one cause, looks always outside himself for it, and kills or cures by surgery alone: if a fact be stubborn, annihilate it; if a man, liquidate him! Never thereafter need birth and death or body and soul cost him another thought; never thereafter has he another thought to disburse.

The most recent generation of that kind might alter Wordsworth's line to their cut as: We have given our minds away, a sordid boon! Nurtured at the tumid breasts of the cult of sound and fury, they have come to interpret literature as an accumulation of pathogenics and violence, and the whole duty of art as a scheme of multiplication and beast worship—a monster is better than a man, and two monsters are twice as good as one. Theoretical disquisition has replaced substantive knowledge as the proper occupation of the student, and one may conjecture one's way to self-esteem in the psychological sciences, and statisticize it in the social. Granted both stuffy purist and well-ventilated simpleton are eccentric, which is the nearer frenzy?

The precisian errs, but he errs on the side of the angels. So concentrated is his will to be right that he is often so inconsequentially. He belongs to the past; that is the worst that can be said of him. By the choice that grows from habit, as by the formalism that comes from method, he clings to established order. His mania is accuracy, that we may not lose the thing which has been reasoned. He is prudent, and irreconcilable to fatuity. He gnarls early, and bears crabs. He will touse a syllable but he will not trifle with an idea. His wisdom is narrow; it counsels against the snare of ignorant good-will.

More immediately, his obsidian intelligence has an affirmative function. It operates to keep the standard of public performance high. He pardons nothing in the arts, holding out for an honest job diligently discharged, and in the arts of discourse, which have most of mind about them, he is peculiarly inexorable. Of application there, he considers two propositions fundamental: if a man go

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into print, or speak in privilege of authority, his utterance is solemn; if such a man will not trouble to be right, he is a cheat. An enlightened charity is an individual excellence, but it is no argument for an artistic imperfection. Genius does not pretend, perhaps, nor does innocence, but the ranges of ability between are conscious of themselves and of their acts and intentions. The negative attribute of pretension is humility, and the pretentious exact humiliation. Furthermore, the credibility of a man is largely dependent on the accidence of thought; not every saying is instantly susceptible of evaluation, but the language of it is. Indeed, the wording of the serviceable idea is the primary index of its merit, as of the sovereign idea it is the ultimate.

Let not the precisian be discouraged, therefore. He keeps a good watch, notwithstanding he sometimes growls away the wrong stranger.

Who, for that matter, are the right strangers? We shall not receive every applicant on terms of a standing order of oblivion. If not, what rejection can escape suspicion of a captious inhospitality? Good faith is not enough, but neither is every stricture merely surly. What is a mistake, and what a blunder? We have a general impression of a race who plod the wet earth of germinating orthology, who cannot discern the presence or the height of an obstacle, who are not wilfully blind, but light-heartedly strabismic; nevertheless we shall be at odds about their identity in specific instances. Amy Lowell called a Tibetan monk a *llama*. The *Times* lately contains a poem in which *inex-plic-able* will do, as well as the locution "me who sees." Five of the next ten who use the phrase will give it as "the lame, the halt, and the blind." And has any one raised on Kipling ever known what "benefit of clergy" means? Are these all lapses, and all equally inoffensive? What of "lame" for "maimed" in the Scriptural motto? Blunder perhaps, because of the absurdity? And shall Amy Lowell plead want of motive, yet keep credit?

An unmixed awkwardness is, of course, not difficult to recognize. But there are connoisseurs among the sticklers who husband the term blunder for choice opportunity. They consider it as squandered upon a mere clumsiness. They lie in wait to triumph when ostentation collapses. They do great good in their jolly way. A false erudition is their chief butt, and the elusive circumstance exalts the occasion. A local college president was addressing a division of his faculty not long since, and, by a fatal irony, discriminating reality from appearance. Studying his effect, he cited the aphorism as: *non videri sed esse*. If he had looked carefully he might thereupon have seen dozens of spasmodic throats inaudibly articulating the time-worn maxim, *esse quam videri*. Carpers were loosed and he was fair game. So is Miss Edith Sitwell. In "The Pleasures of Poetry" she analyzes the tonal beauties of Milton's "May I express thee unblamed? since God is light," and expatiates thus: "Again, the long *A* in the final, and rising foot, makes the line seem even longer than its eleven syllables—yet there is no irregularity." None, it may be whispered, but the shocking one of saying "late" for "light," as, in exquisite cockney, Miss Sitwell undoubtedly does. The agnostic pessimism of describing God as late is a dialectal heresy, rather than a theological, we may believe; but the tendency of it is menacing; it is, in all conscience, high time the provincialisms of Britain were regulated; to humor the vernacular while we talk of reforming the native is idle when it is not mischievous.

If, then, that notion of a blunder be adopted, a useful distinction between the extremes of error may be drawn, for one is artless and the other artificial, and mistakes slip in but blunders come on parade. The ignorance of the ignorant is pure ignorance; the incompetent are early found out and easily silenced; the absurd emit hoarse cries endlessly in empty places; but the blunderer issues fair tokens and practises foul deceits. He waxes upon you in raiment of color and arrogates the manner of dominion. What wonder that his swift wane into an incongruous minimum provokes mocking laughter? The kin of Bottom thrive, alas; they get on in the world; they become teachers and novelists and reviewers and professional sciolists. One, a professor of criticism under eminent academic auspices, objected the other day to Joyce Kilmer's "Trees" for the reason that "a nest of robins in her hair" raised distasteful images of phthiriasis. With the statement that ". . . . it ends in tragedy of Elizabethan dimensions" a third introduces an appraisal of "We in Captivity" and swells thence to the blissful assurance that "One does not question or doubt anything"; and in a simultaneous critique elsewhere Ernest Boyd shows the plangent superlative to be nonsense by remarking that Thomas MacDonagh's name "is misspelled every time it occurs." A fourth, who subsists by works that mitigate hard matter and simplify the centuries into centos, turned a point in conversation upon the identical meaning of Immaculate Conception and Virgin Birth. But of that familiar hebetude enough; of it weary, weary, weary are we.

As a species, of course, the precisian will deny the utility of differentiating errors. He requires faultlessness of those who shape the age, and his obdurate insistence upon it is always admirable, despite the element of tilting at windmills. Now and again it is more than admirable, and to restore us to sanity it is imperative. When even a scrupulous man has the floor his tongue soon has the man, and when every man writes as he talks gibbering madness runs amuck. There is an obligation to be right, for an inaccuracy is an omen of untruth. Prophetically Dr. Johnson admonished Mrs. Thrale: "Well, Madam, and you *ought* to be perpetually watching. It is more from carelessness about truth than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world."

Lest false representations be imposed upon us, let no man presume to be entitled to the dispensations of genius, and let every man take pains to be right. We shall then need no shrill-mouthed monitor, and the sooner be rid of him. The Puritan, who was first cousin to the precisian, legislated morality, yet fell short of virtue. His laws died of desuetude. But the wistful barbarian has always loved vice for itself and done sacrifice to viciousness. Enthusiastically he has burned the archives and hanged the magistrates. We must resist the fashionable pressure to emulate him. If for no other satisfaction than that of antiquarian curiosity, still were the dictionaries and their fanatic custodians better spared.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—Despite recent secular press reports to the contrary the National Catholic Welfare Conference News Service reports from Vatican City, December 19, "There is no concrete Vatican Anti-Communist campaign. The Holy See has wished always, and especially of late, to call universal attention to the dangers and menace of Communist propaganda." * * * At the annual meeting of the parish conferences of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Chicago, Cardinal Mundelein declared, "If we could multiply tenfold our army of Catholic men volunteer workers in the field of charity, if these were allowed to care for all the poor in their districts, I feel I could with assurance say, 'It could not happen here.'" * * * According to the 1937 "English Catholic Directory" the Catholic population in England has increased to 2,353,589; converts last year numbered 11,648. * * * The Fine Arts Department of the Catholic University of Peiping is preparing an exhibition of Christian painting in the Chinese style, including sixty paintings by Prince P'u Chin, great-grandson of the Emperor Tao Kuang. * * * In suggesting a list of topics from the Sunday Gospels for the weekly sermons in his diocese this year, Bishop Griffin of Springfield, Ill., said, "Catholicism is no sterile arm-chair philosophy. It calls for the practical application of morality and religion in the problems of every-day life. * * * Only by a profound renewal of the Christian spirit, and not merely by legislative tinkering with our social and economic life, can we avert a class war and chaos in America and in the world. * * * The Illinois Club for Catholic Women have erected a Crib on the lawn adjoining the famous Water Tower in Chicago, where thousands of passersby will see it throughout the Christmas season from its vantage point at Michigan and Chicago Avenues. * * * More than 1,200 laymen participated in a day of recollection in observance of the silver jubilee of St. Gabriel's Retreat League of Brighton, Mass. * * * Eight members of the American hierarchy, in addition to Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia, the Papal Legate, will attend the Eucharistic Congress at Manila, February 3-7.

The Nation.—The first step in the executive reorganization of the federal governmental machinery was announced to be the consolidation of the Resettlement Administration, an independent agency, into the Department of Agriculture. This was to be effective January 1, at the same time as the resignation of Resettlement Administrator Tugwell. * * * Campaign cost figures, filed with the Clerk of the House of Representatives, indicate that the Communists spent more money to obtain a vote in November than any other party. For every vote polled, Socialists spent $.11; Democrats, $.125; Republicans, $.45; Communists, $2.02. * * * The Farm Credit Administration announced that in three years, production credit associations, operating cooperatively under its supervision, have made more than 574,000 loans to farmers to finance their crop growing and cattle raising. Loans have averaged about $870, the total being more than $500,000,000. Loans at present outstanding amount to about $105,000,000. This farmer-operated production credit system has grown most rapidly where farm recovery is most pronounced. "This tends to disprove a popular notion that farmers patronize cooperative enterprises only in times of financial difficulty," according to the analysis of FCA Governor Myers. * * * The Interstate Commerce Commission decided not to permit Class I railroads to maintain emergency freight charges after the first of the year. The railroads wanted to keep them until sixty days after the ICC will have passed on proposed general freight-rate adjustments. Railway securities were very hard hit on the exchanges, investors registering disagreement with the commission's idea that increased prosperity and traffic will compensate for the withdrawal of emergency rates. * * * The first winter inaugural in American history is being planned on a modest scale for January 20. There will be no ball at all, and the parade will feature only detachments from the regular services and cadets and midshipmen from West Point and Annapolis, and small parties assembled by state governors, each one limited to only three automobiles.

The Wide World.—Newspaper men delegated to watch the Duke of Windsor and Mrs. Wallis Simpson had plenty of time to indulge a fondness for poker. All was quiet at the Rothschild castle near Enzesfeld, Austria, save for a village choral society which incidentally yodeled. At Cannes Mrs. Simpson did such epochal things as sit in the sun for an hour and get her picture taken. Rumors that the Duke would return to England after his brother's coronation were not confirmed. * * * Preparations for another offensive against Madrid were reported from Spain. But the principal incidents in the tragic conflict were international in character. Reports that members of the regular German army were being enlisted for service with General Franco were taken seriously in London, where Mr. Eden demanded that the non-interference pact be accepted by Germany at face value. Conversely, Russia was greatly excited over the sinking of the Komsomol, a freighter en route to Belgium, off the Spanish coast by a Franco warship. The Moscow official press characterized this action as "piracy," and alleged that the proper action under international law would be taken. Of course this incident once again threatened to make the Spanish Civil War a general European controversy. Meanwhile some progress toward immunization had been made. Poland barred aid to Spain, making a ruling that volunteering for service there would involve loss of Polish citizenship. The House of Commons was told that Great Britain would lend her influence to strengthening the non-intervention agreement. * * * A conflict between President Miguel Gomez and Colonel

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Fulgencio Battista over a proposed sugar tax to finance an educational program endorsed by the army led to charges and counter-charges. On December 19, it was reported that the President had packed up his belongings and would abdicate. The next day brought a denial. Meanwhile the opposition went ahead with plans to impeach the chief executive. * * * Speaking at Littoria, outside Rome, Il Duce predicted that since universal peace had never existed it never would exist. He declared his willingness to accept it for as long a time as possible. For the moment Italy could be well content with the victory in Ethiopia, which country he declared well under control. * * * The Chamber of Deputies passed the Blum budget, which showed a huge deficit. But it was significant that the principal attack came from Paul Reynaud, widely believed to be the foremost French authority on finance. He declared that the fruits of devaluation were in peril and might easily be lost if the policy of raising prices were adhered to. * * * A severe earthquake demolished San Vincente, in El Salvador, on the night of December 19. There was considerable loss of life. It was said that only one building had remained standing. * * * At a plenary session of the Inter-American Conference, meeting in Buenos Aires on December 19, the "neutrality treaty" (described in THE COMMONWEAL last week) was unanimously adopted. A number of subsidiary resolutions designed to promote better understanding between the republics were likewise approved.

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The Mysterious Orient.—The dictator of China continued (since December 12) to be respectfully kidnapped by the local war lord, Chang Hsueh-liang. Even after ten days Nanking reported: "The Chinese government is refusing to negotiate any political terms with the rebels. The present parleys have no political or international significance but are being privately conducted, aiming solely at Chiang Kai-shek's release." It is extremely difficult to know how separate are Chiang and the Chinese government. Certainly many people were doing much negotiating of many sorts, and most observers believed political negotiating—even if Chiang himself concentrated, as his personal representative reported, upon sleeping and reading the Chinese classics. For Chiang's freedom General Chang was said to demand: an immediate grant of $30,000,000 for his own army; a new and better garrison area; equipment and supplies equal to those provided for government armies; a stronger front against Japan; executive positions for officers of Chang's army in the proposed anti-Japanese army for national salvation. The demand stressed at the beginning, at least in the news, was that the central government recognize the Communist organizations and armies, and solicit their cooperation in opposing Japan. Mr. Kawagoe, Japanese Ambassador to China, remarked that Japan was merely benevolently observant of the whole crisis, but that if the Chinese government came to an agreement with Chang which included collaboration with the Communists, Japan would be forced "to take adequate steps to neutralize the effects of such a policy." The revolt was broader than at first reported, including the provinces of Shensi and Kansu, 220,000 square miles, 14,000,000 to 18,000,000 people, and the armies of Chang himself, of Yang Fu-cheng, which is most powerful in the immediate neighborhood of Sian, where Chiang is held prisoner, and of Yu Hsueh-ching, the former governor of Hopei, removed by Japanese pressure. The Communist armies are supposedly friendly to the revolt movement.

Wheat Goes Up.—Wheat prices soared on the announcement that Germany would need quantities of wheat before spring. Estimates of the shortage differed, but the best available figures reckoned in terms of millions of bushels. This development had not been anticipated, although doubts concerning the precariousness of the German economic structure have been dispelled since publication of a London *Economist* survey some months ago. Hitherto, however, the principal minus quantities have been meats and fats. The rigid theories of price control were enforced sporadically but vehemently, according to private reports emanating from a large number of cities and towns. Further restrictions on butter and lard are expected. The wheat shortage is not the result of a poor crop merely. It is in part caused by the inability of German farmers to secure fodder for their animals, necessitating use of grain. Autarchy theorists had failed to take into account the effect of rising prices on the farm plant itself. Among the immediate psychological results is intensification of the feeling that Germany is living as if it were at war. Older residents are painfully reminded of the sacrifices of 1918 and 1919. What can be done to relieve the situation? Dr. Schacht has reverted to his time-honored thesis that Germany's colonies must be restored. Little direct economic benefit could, however, be derived from such regions as Southwest Africa. It seems more probable that Great Britain will extend some credit contingent upon important political concessions. This might tide the Nazis over the winter, but quite obviously would not alter the long-range view.

The Pope's Illness.—The health of Pius XI, which received a serious set-back on December 17, after the Pope had been too strenuous in carrying on his work, apparently revived as Christmas approached. Although he was forced to call off his regular Christmas audiences with the cardinals and with the diplomatic corps, he did make plans with Vatican technicians to deliver a Christmas Eve radio greeting at 6:30 a.m., Eastern Standard Time, December 24. Although seventy-nine years old, the Pontiff was reported as definitely rebellious at the attentions of his doctor who "for some reason best known to himself" persists in treating him as ill. "When my voice is heard over the radio, it is to be hoped the world will at least believe I am alive." A semi-official announcement from the Vatican on December 21 stated: "The condition of the Pope remains satisfactory, taking into consideration the existing circumstances." The "existing circumstances" continued, however, to sound disturbing. "Pius XI is compelled to remain motionless because of the varicose condition of his left leg." His doctors are consulting

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about the advisability of using Senator Nocola Pende's newest treatment for high blood pressure. The Pope's present trouble commenced over two weeks ago with a slight paralytic stroke. He is reported as suffering from general debility and general arteriosclerotic conditions due to old age. The difficulty with his leg developed because of circulatory stagnation and because His Holiness concealed the trouble from his physician until it was far advanced. Vatican statement-makers persisted in saying that there is certainly no immediate danger for the Pope's life.

Prexy on the Carpet.—Last summer, following an educational upheaval occasioned by the kind of football "Doc" Spears had been teaching, the University of Wisconsin began to buzz with talk to the effect that the La Follettes were gunning for President Glenn Frank. Madison is not merely a small town. It has four lakes, and its share of eccentric people. The university has always enjoyed a reputation for progressiveness, but its success is actually less contingent upon the fame of any of its "radicals" than upon the solid achievement of a race of scholars like Van Hise and Thwaites. Even when Dr. Meiklejohn was thrown in as Leftist ballast, the Badger State alma mater was at least as conservative as its environment. This fact was always a little irksome to the boosters of Wisconsin as a commonwealth some miles in front of the human race, and Dr. Frank originally came to the university as a kind of human electrifier and air conditioner. He was a noted speaker, a fluent writer, and the expounder of Mr. Edward A. Filene's economic doctrines. But he had no higher degrees—a misfortune that made him look very like an inferior human being to some. For this he atoned, in the opinion of the Milwaukee *Journal,* by his ability to act, talk, dine and motor like a first-class executive. He did crafty work in the legislature until the depression forced appropriations downward. Sometimes he fenced neatly with the radicals, his most notable opponent being Professor William Ellery Leonard. He always defended a liberal when he could, but there were occasions when the thing was quite unthinkable. During 1935 he emerged for a time as a possible Republican candidate for the presidency; and the move was a great mistake. Nobody outside Wisconsin took him very seriously, and there the tide was strongly Rooseveltian. To what extent the La Follettes are actually involved in the present move no one is really prepared to say. Certainly it looks as if they had stacked the Board of Regents in their favor. But the charges against Mr. Frank are characteristically Madisonian. He is said to talk excessively and say too little. Under his guidance the Wisconsin idea has come to look very much like any other idea. And he wears better clothes than the average Progressive. At all events, the problem is to be debated publicly, and therewith the issue of political control of a major university is going to be brought into the open.

Non-Catholic Religious Activities.—Delegates from the 160 colleges and universities maintained by the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church have just met at Atlanta, Ga. Dr. William Warren Sweet of Chicago told the assembled delegates, who represented institutions with a total enrolment of 175,000, that the "future of American Methodist Education does not lie in competition with large state institutions." Fascism and Communism were designated by President J. H. Reynolds of Hendrix College as the most likely threats to academic freedom. He declared that "this danger can best be met by providing an ever-increasing stream of able, well-trained, fearless leaders capable of guiding society wisely. The most effective agency to produce this independent leadership thus far discovered is the church-related college." * * * Five synods of the American Lutheran Conference have issued an appeal to Lutheran pastors and church leaders to take a strong stand against anti-Semitism which they condemn as "a perversion of God's word." The statement also quotes the annual address of Dr. J. A. Aasgaard, president of the Norwegian Lutheran Church, who expressed the hope that "in these days of rising anti-Jewish sentiment we may not be engulfed by unreasoned prejudice against the race from which Our Lord and Saviour sprang, and that we make use of every opportunity afforded us to bring them the blessings of the Christian faith." * * * The Committee on Civic Affairs of the Washington, D. C., federation of churches has issued a protest to Admiral Cary T. Grayson, who is in charge of the arrangements for President Roosevelt's second inauguration, January 20. According to present plans only military units will parade—the army, the navy, the marines, West Point and the Naval Academy being represented. If these plans go through, the committee hopes that a peace float at least may be included.

The German Refugee Problem.—What to do for the refugee from Nazi Germany is a problem to which the Christian bodies of the United States have paid far too little attention. Help is the more urgent because many of those in exile are trained intellectuals, the value of whose work in behalf of culture cannot be sacrificed without heavy loss. During recent months, the American Christian Committee has launched a campaign for $400,000, and a special Christmas appeal, signed by Protestants and Catholics, asks in particular for aid to "non-Aryan" Christians. "Several thousands of Christian refugees from Germany are in pitiable circumstances," says the appeal. "They are in most cases men and women of education—journalists, advocates of peace, clergymen and teachers—who are now enduring poverty and hardship in lands foreign to them. From day to day they call tremblingly at the refugee relief stations, seeking bread, clothing, work." Naturally the Committee does not wish to ignore the many Aryan refugees, hundreds of whom are likewise in dire need. But the "non-Aryan" problem is especially acute; and in order that it may be fully understood, it is well to repeat once more that in Germany a "non-Aryan" is a person who has some Jewish ancestry—i.e., a Jewish parent, grandparent or in some instances great-grandparent. Meanwhile, in response to a direct appeal, the American Catholic hierarchy has established a special committee of bishops to raise funds for the relief of Catholic

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refugees from Germany. Archbishops Rummel and Stritch, together with Bishop Noll, are establishing local agencies to take charge of the situation. The cooperation of all is urgently requested.

Toward 1940.—The executives of the Republican National Committee met in Chicago, December 18 and 19. Governor Landon's campaign manager was elected by a vote of 74 to 2, chairman of the national committee for the next three and a half years. For a salary of $15,000 a year and an annual expense account of $10,000, John Hamilton will move to Washington where he will direct the operations that are to bring congressional successes in 1938 and national victory in 1940. Senator Borah is reported to have commented on Mr. Hamilton's appointment in this wise: $25,000 "as I understand it, is the customary salary of receivers. "Mr. Hamilton is said to be of the belief that the Republicans must adopt "an honest, modern, progressive attitude, marked by intelligent consideration of questions and issues of popular interest and concern. . . . There is always a place in the American political system for a militant, vigorous minority. The duty of the Republican party will be to see that the program of the majority is consistent with sound government, socially and economically, and that it is carried out under the Constitution." To liquidate the party's debt of over $900,000 Mr. Hamilton will appoint a finance committee, and the executive committee has expressed itself as of the belief that most of the money should come from the masses rather than a few wealthy contributors. Outside the halls of Congress the chief work of rehabilitation will be organizational and educational with preliminary investigations to determine policies that are popular. Observers hold that in numbers and quality of leadership the Republicans are not strong in either House or Senate, but some domestic or international issues may arise that can be counted on to give them new strength.

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Labor Trouble. — The maritime strike, two months old and far from settlement, receded from the center of the labor disputes news. On December 18 and 19 and 20, in C. I. O. meetings at Washington and Pittsburgh, leaders of industrial unionism began calling their shots in a very disconcerting way. Their predictions were backed up by present strike movements in the shipbuilding, hosiery, celanese, rubber, automobile and relief industries. The flat glass industry of the country is almost completely tied up by a strike of the Federation of Flat Glass Workers, a C. I. O. union. They have shut Pittsburgh Plate Glass and Libbey-Owens-Ford, which together make 90 percent of the country's flat glass. The stoppage in glass began quickly to hit automobile assembly lines, and on December 16 it was predicted that in three weeks the auto industry would be tied up in the glass trouble weren't settled. The Kelsey-Hayes Wheel Company and the National Automotive Fibers Company were two other supply businesses tied up, and Chevrolet and Fisher Bodies were experiencing strikes directly. On December 18, the United Automobile Workers announced that they were looking for a collective contract with General Motors. Their president, Homer Martin, asked how many members the U. A. W. had in G. M., replied, "We have enough to do business with." The trade journal, *Ward's Reports,* stated: "A general wave of sympathy is passing from one plant to another when labor trouble develops. Such a condition is a new one in the auto industry." Union labor, not content with challenging General Motors, is also tightening its drive against United States Steel and the rest of the steel industry. On December 20, at a meeting called by the C. I. O. of representatives from forty-two company unions, Philip Murray leader of the steel drive, declared, "The company union system must be put out of business." The C. I. O. wants the company unions to join, en bloc, the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers. The Amalgamated already claims 115,000 of the 500,000 steel workers.

Down on the Farm.—The government Crop Reporting Board announced, December 18, that due to the greatest crop shortage of recent years, except for 1934, the nation's farm income had risen to $9,530,000,000 in 1936, the highest figure for six years. Observers held that the American farmer's problems were far from solved, however. Because of the loss, much of it permanent, of foreign markets and the diminishing demand for feed due to the supplanting of horses by tractors, there are still an estimated excess of 30,000,000 to 40,000,000 acres under cultivation. Under normal weather conditions some form of crop control appeared inevitable if farm prices were to be kept above ruinous levels. An official Department of Agriculture report of December 21 stated that 57,187,000 acres had been planted in winter wheat, "the largest acreage on record," but adverse weather had reduced the crop to 75.8 percent of normal, December 1, and a yield far below the peak of 748,460,000 bushels in 1918 is expected. In his annual report to the President, Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace has been more insistent than ever on production control: "For the moment it may seem premature to talk again about overproduction, but experience proves that under blind competition one or two good crop years can pile up surpluses. Average yields in this country next year would give an export surplus." Under normal conditions "the existing wheat acreage in the United States will produce large export surpluses for which satisfactory outlets do not exist." Secretary Wallace believed that "a more widespread diffusion of farm ownership, providing such ownership can be protected from the vicissitudes of economic life," would be a feasible remedy for the farm tenancy problem in some areas. And in opening the sessions of the President's special committee on farm tenancy Secretary Wallace declared: "To an unusual degree this whole problem is a human problem, and there are many tenants who have never demonstrated either desire or capacity to attempt ownership." W. L. Blackstone, of Wynne, Ark., and the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, the first share-cropper to serve on a government body, spoke for unionization as essential to any satisfactory solution of the problem.

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The Play and Screen

Days to Come

HAD LILLIAN HELLMAN known more clearly just what she intended to convey, "Days to Come" would have been a more effective play. The drama is not the novel, which can be a catch-all for all sorts of ideas and emotions and yet remain interesting; because of its time limit the drama must eliminate, compress and synthesize. The drama can be rich in content, but its richness must not be spread indiscriminately, it must be a richness of depth rather than of breadth. What Miss Hellman probably started out with was the desire to write a play showing the horrors of strikebreaking as a profession and its influence on both the employer and the unemployed—in short, another propaganda play. But Miss Hellman has in her the quality of a real dramatist, one of those qualities being an interest in human beings for their own sake, and another one an ability to write terse pregnant dialogue. Now the trouble with her present play is that she never seems able to decide just which ideal must dominate. The propaganda play is there, and she makes of strikebreaking a very unpleasant business indeed, with the strikebreakers the most living of her characters. Had she contented herself with making her play merely a melodrama with a purpose, it is altogether possible that she would have turned out a very workmanlike job. Unfortunately she wanted to make it more than this: the studies also of a woman seeking for an ideal, of an idealistic labor leader, of a well-meaning employer deceived by his wife, and of an acidulous old maid. The result is the confused depiction of a number of unreal characters uttering remarks darkly in an atmosphere as unreal as the characters themselves. It is a pity, for Miss Hellman often writes poetically and vividly. Moreover, the cast contains some excellent actors, notably Florence Eldridge, Ned Wever, Joseph Sweeney, Charles Dingle and Ben Smith, who do well despite the somewhat leisurely direction of the play. (At the Vanderbilt Theatre.)

Brother Rat

THIS is the third play of the season dealing with life in an American military school, and the first one that rings the bell. The two preceding plays gave a jaundiced view of military education, leaving the impression that a diploma from such a school means that a very unpleasant young man indeed has been launched into society. The authors of these two plays must have had a hard time at military schools, and it is to be suspected that their troubles were not solely the fault of the schools, but largely due to their own hatred of discipline of any sort. But John Monks, jr., and Fred F. Finklehoffe were evidently more normally disposed youngsters and in "Brother Rat" they have set forth the adolescent humor of the boys at the Virginia Military Institute. These boys are interested in girls, and in passing their exams, and in baseball, and in hazing plebes, but they are all likable, and adolescently masculine, and naif. Some of them will become rotarians, and some of them congressmen who are also rotarians, but despite their surface cynicism, which is very adolescent too, they will turn out a pretty healthy type of American, not in the least militarized by their saluting and gun-carrying. The story is simple, having to do with a boy who is secretly married and who is helped through his exams by a girl who is smuggled into his rooms. There are other boys interested in another girl, and a delightful plebe who is made to fetch and carry, and there is much slang, and two or three passages which good taste might have omitted, and a general indulgence, when the boys and girls meet, in that amalgam of imagination and idiocy called a "line." On the whole it is amusing and high-spirited and deals with a lot of likable youths and maidens. It is, too, well acted, with special words of praise for Eddie Albert, Frank Albertson, Jose Ferrer and Mary Mason, and a double special word for Ezra Stone's delightfully humorous portrayal of the earnest and courageous plebe. George Abbott directed the play with his accustomed speed and sureness of touch. With the exception of the few passages of doubtful taste, one of which occurs at the curtain of the first act, "Brother Rat" is a pleasing addition to the very few plays by Americans which have so far entered the list of the season's successes. (At the Biltmore Theatre.)

GRENVILLE VERNON.

After the Thin Man

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER responds to the reception accorded Dashiell Hammett's "Thin Man" with a sequel which continues the vein of melodramatic murder mystery, again riding a wave of crisply dialogued merriment. Atmospherically and in fundamental plot it is similar to the first play, with an added refreshing difference in the further adventures in the field of guess-proof crime solution by the redoubtable amateur detective. William Powell and Myrna Loy, and the same writing, directing and producing staffs that put together the predecessor, continue to unravel the causes of a new family scandal and triple murder. It is long and there are occasional lapses of action, but new interest is quickly generated and in the end the results are enjoyable, even though not outstanding.

Abyssinia

UNADULTERATED political propaganda written in "newsreel" style by the state-controlled motion picture agency of Soviet Russia, in behalf of Communism as against Fascism. The Red "lesson" advanced this time is in the nature of an attack on Fascistic Italy for its purported ruthlessness in Ethiopia, where Il Duce's imperialistic might, as exemplified by modern scientific war machinery, is shown pitted against the hopelessness of Ethiopia's primitive defensive. As might be expected, the propaganda is anything but subtle, reaching its climax with the picturization of the destruction of an Ethiopian field hospital by Italian bombs. Besides the story of the unscrupulousness of the attack, the Soviet's own newsreel cameramen, from Soyuzfilmnews, brought back some interesting scenes of the locale.

JAMES P. CUNNINGHAM.

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Communications

AN OLD GRAD WRITES IN

Cambridge, Mass.

TO the Editor: Mr. Skinner said much that is sensible on the matter of "plant" in his genial little paper entitled "An Old Grad Writes In," which appeared in THE COMMONWEAL for November 13. But when he went on to discuss the distinction between teachers and research scholars, I found that my experience as undergraduate and graduate student in three different American universities was quite at variance with his assumptions and conclusions.

Achieving a satisfactory balance between the teaching and research activities of its staff must be one of the most delicate and difficult tasks of any university administration, involving complicated considerations of educational philosophy, available personalities and funds, and the changing needs of the particular institution. But looking at the question simply as a student, I find Mr. Skinner's view a misleading oversimplification based on a few extreme examples and some highly questionable hypotheses.

My own observation of university professors, at any rate, is that the pure teacher type and the pure research type are of rare occurrence; that marked teaching ability is as likely as not to go along with zest for research; and that, other things being equal, a good teacher who does a certain amount of original research is the better teacher in consequence. Furthermore, I question whether the rigid separation of teaching and research that Mr. Skinner advocates would be desirable, even if it were feasible. The two types of activity, I think it could be shown, are naturally and historically complementary, by no means a merely artificial combination designed to satisfy the exigencies of present-day administration.

Dullness in teachers is the result of lack of energy or talent and, as far as I have been able to observe, has no perceptible correlation with interest in research. But the dull man who can give his students the results of his own personal investigations in his field is certainly preferable to the dull retailer of second-hand material and is preferred by genuine students. The same students are quick to evaluate the enlivening lecturer who has been delivering the same bright lectures for years. Whereas the really gifted teacher who can enrich his teaching with the fruits of his own research and original thinking deserves that highest of compliments: that he gives his students the things—tangible as well as intangible—that they could not find in books. He is the true and admired scholar of the first rank as actually found in our great universities today: a highly energized and able personality whose complex function is to make important explorations in his always boundless field, to report his findings as presentably as possible, and to train and inspire younger men. And he is not likely to be content or efficient for any long period, I suspect, if he is artificially confined to but one branch of his normal activity.

A really thorough discussion of this question, of course, would require a definition of the term "college" and a clear decision as to whether this peculiarly American and still evolving institution is to be thought of as partaking more of the nature of a secondary school or of a university. I may say that I am assuming the latter and I think it may fairly be inferred that Mr. Skinner is likewise. On this basis, I seriously question his defining the "one most important job" of a college teacher as that of "persuading, beguiling and cajoling my sons and grandsons into loving the distilled elixir of scholarship." A student is not ready for college while he is still dependent for what he will learn on his teachers' powers of enchantment: those are the uncovenanted gifts of fortune, to be gratefully enjoyed but hardly to be demanded as a right in a workaday world. However, "the distilled elixir of scholarship," I have found, is most heady when fresh from the retort of its distiller.

ALICE JOYCE LYDON.

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editor: Mr. Richard Dana Skinner's article leads me to express an opposing point of view. I have always admired Mr. Skinner's good judgment and appreciation of values as expressed in his reviews of plays, and I was therefore astonished to read his criticism of college education from the standpoint of a business man, urging that in a university there should be "a clear division of labor within the faculty" between teaching and research, "similar to the division between a production and a sales department in a well-organized business." I can well understand that in such fields as English literature such a separation can be made, as the professor of English may have excellent critical judgment and perspective and yet not be able to write a good poem or a good play or be interested in literary research. But Mr. Skinner chooses a science, geology, as his illustration. I know nothing about geology but I have a right to speak about the fields of biological sciences, having been a member of the teaching and research departments of several American universities of the highest standing and having published experimental work done in a teaching department of one of England's greatest universities. I can therefore say from conviction and from experience that an arm-chair scientist is an extremely superficial teacher.

I know this Mr. Mortimer type that Mr. Skinner admires. He is an enthusiastic young assistant instructor with "teaching verve" who impresses the most sophomorish of the students because he depicts everything in clear-cut blacks and whites with none of the subtler tones and gradations which constitute the truth that is learned by first-hand experience. He is liked by the mediocre majority of students who are merely passive listeners and who want to acquire knowledge as painlessly as possible. But the students who are keen, and who should be the only ones entitled to a college education, soon realize that Mr. Mortimer has not sufficient intellectual curiosity to seek the answers to problems by his own experiments, and that in no field has Mr. Mortimer attained by his own research any right to speak with authority. It is only by carrying out original experiments that a man can see the sources of error in statements which the arm-chair scien-

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tist dispenses so glibly as facts. If it was left to Mr. Mortimer to write up Professor Stanleigh's discoveries, as Mr. Skinner advises, the information would be so jazzed up that all semblance to truth would be gone. Unfortunately in America, but not often in England, the universities accept boys whose fathers consider that the college's "one most important job of persuading, beguiling and cajoling sons and grandsons into loving the distilled elixirs of scholarship" is their reason for being. If such boys, who are not eager for an education but are being forced by parents to go to college, were excluded, the colleges would be able to give a better education to those deserving it, and would need no increase in "the plant" which Mr. Skinner deplores.

In preparatory schools the technique of teaching is important, and the teacher cannot be expected to be more than a second-hand purveyor of other people's discoveries; but in colleges the mere technique of teaching is relatively unimportant, and the really vital matter is that the teacher know his subject as intimately as only his own research can make it possible for him to know it, and that he inspire his students by his own intellectual outlook, an intellectual integrity that is infectious no matter how dull and labored may be the means of expressing it.

Isolde T. Zeckwer, M. D.

ANOTHER WORRIED PASTOR

St. Agatha, Me.

TO the Editor: In reply to the "worried pastor's" query (Commonweal, November 27, 1936, pages 113-114), I should like to make the following suggestions.

The condition this zealous priest describes is not particular to his parish. I am convinced that it is widespread, perhaps universal in the parishes of this country. Compiling statistics will avail little if at all. They uncover facts, but offer no remedy.

The parish under consideration is ideally provided for, yet its spiritual life is at a relatively low ebb. What is the cause? It must be found either (a) in the parishioners' life, or (b) in the priests' use of the means they dispose of.

(a) Our people for the most part live and move in a non-Catholic atmosphere. Indifferentism, paganism, materialism, agnosticism, are in the very air they breathe. These influences blunt their religious sense, and build up, oftentimes unconsciously, a strong resistance to supernatural appeal. Hence it is that so many of our faithful get pleasure-mad, become nature-bound.

(b) Then too, perhaps, the apostolic approach to souls limps somewhat. The avenues leading to man's inner life are the intellect, will and sense. Nothing, I presume, need be said about the latter approach. But what about the other two? How, v. g., is catechism taught in the school? Is it the kind described by William Franklin Sands in The Commonweal (October 9, 1936, page 562)? What about preaching? Is it merely sentimental, unmethodical, high-flown? Is it afraid to be simple, clear, direct, logical? Is it all emotion and no reasoning, or vice versa? Does it create conviction? How is the study club conducted? Is it just a social gathering of the intelligentsia for a little dabbling in apologetics, etc.? Again, does it create conviction? How do the faithful receive the sacraments? Is the Holy Eucharist, v. g., merely a matter of the Communion breakfast that follows? Do the priests stress enough the importance of the sacraments, the dispositions they require, etc.? Religion is not just simply knowing, but also doing. And to do, God's grace, obtained through the sacraments and prayer, is a sine qua non condition. There are many devotions, unmatched if you will, but is there enough devotion? "Devotions" often run the risk of being mechanical, or just plain fashionable—the "nice" thing to do . . . that allows the lips to outstrip the heart. In fine, do the priests see to it that their people pray, pray well, pray sufficiently? Incidentally, this duty of true prayer is inseparable from genuine apostolic zeal.

My conclusion is obvious: make a better use of the means at hand. Do this perseveringly, plodding on and on, even in the face of stubborn failure. Some good will come of it. The laborer may fail to see it in his lifetime, but the Master will.

There is nothing new in all this, but yet, the truth is such an old, old thing.

Rev. A. Alvéry, *Pastor.*

EASTERN RITES

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editor: The article on St. Michael's, Baltimore, in The Commonweal for November 27 was very interesting.

For many years I have been praying for the reunion of the East with the West, trying to stimulate interest amongst people of the Latin Rite, by inviting them to attend Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Philadelphia. Of course, these have been limited to a few dozens. When the subject is brought up in a group of Catholics the look of surprise and almost confoundment that comes over their faces is amusing. They either never heard of any other Rite, but the Latin, or they thought all other Rites were schismatic.

Let me urge every Commonweal reader, to consult their Catholic Directory and then go and visit the nearest Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, during the celebration of solemn Mass. Here lies a world of new religious experiences, such as the receiving of the Holy Eucharist under both forms. You will be impressed with the beauty of this Rite, the intense feeling of drama at the approach of the Consecration, and even though most of it will be very vague to you at first you cannot but be united in the spirit of the entire Sacrifice. This is true of all the Eastern Rites.

Learn of the wealth of beauty that Mother Church offers all her children, how she offers God to her subjects of all races, tongues and temperaments.

Should you be interested in the Eastern Church in the United States and desire more information, communicate with me, and I shall attempt to answer you, from my very feeble knowledge.

Francis Rowan.

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Books

A Splendid Career

Theatre of Life: Life Seen from the Stalls, 1903-1936, by Esmé Howard, Lord Howard of Penrith. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $4.50.

THE VALUE of Esmé Howard's public life lies in its full expression of the man he is. He has acted publicly exactly as he has lived privately. There is nothing artificial about him. Analysis of this sort will be distasteful to him, but it is necessary. He has written his story. To understand its significance in public affairs the reader needs to know the man beneath the guinea stamp: his simplicity, straightforward and firm; his gentleness, in fearless vigorous action; his inherent nobility of character. Those are all qualities supposed to belong to the perfect diplomatist. If, today, they are more deceiving in diplomacy than guile, it is because we have gone far toward losing out of life the ideal they represent: the old Christian idea of a gentleman.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to conduct public affairs through the medium of those qualities, however unconsciously, without leaving a deep impress on the result. No man like that "sees life from the stalls." He leaves his mark on his time. For, in diplomacy only those qualities count for permanent value. It seems to me more important to raise that point out of his book than to review the record of his interesting and useful years.

Outside of that point, his is the usual diplomatic career of ambassadorial rank in Europe about the period of the World War. It differs essentially from our own. Our diplomacy is still unformed, experimental, often whimsical, or artificially imitative. Ours may be more exciting, because it is precarious. His kind has stronger attraction than ours to American readers, because it is lived against the reality of an ancient tradition; something we know only at second hand from history and literature, but which haunts us atavistically. As new men in the world, Americans often resent tradition in America. We expect it, we cherish it in Europe.

The first volume has to do with the author's youth, before he settled into his career. It is a gay youth, adventurous, lived whole-heartedly but responsibly. In this second volume, he might have been expected to write as a tired man, a disillusioned man, like others of similar experience. That is, anyone might expect it who had not known him amidst war-time burdens, or the hopelessness of the post-war world. To those who did so know him it is no surprise to find again here, in the story of heavy responsibilities well-met, that same elasticity, the same gay serenity, the same integrity which endeared him even to his enemy colleagues, and carried him safely through the disintegration of his world.

The honest efforts of men meeting the tidal waves of human emotions, honestly recorded, are of the essence of history. This is the story of a wise and just man; the kind of man who—thank God!—is not so rare in diplomacy as callow "realists" would have us believe.

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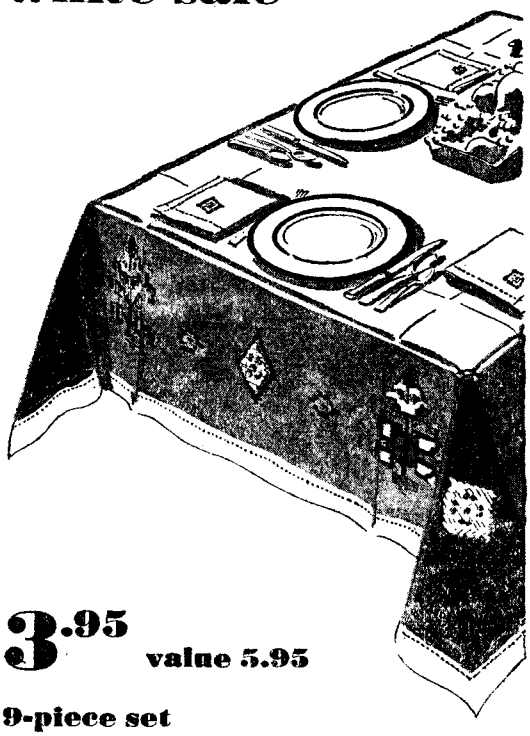

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Next Week

TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIAL JUSTICE, is an attempt by the eminent Louis J. A. Mercier to extract the good he believes resides in "individualism, capitalism, and freedom of initiative," and preserve it from the onslaughts of young Catholic denunciators. Undoubtedly many of our readers share some of Professor Mercier's qualms; all our readers will find fascinating his clear expression of an intelligible point of view. . . . CHILDREN VERSUS STATISTICS is contributed by a teacher who, quite naturally, must remain anonymous. It attacks the question of the "report card." The mechanical data, mechanically and tediously obtained, never integrated into a living picture, is shown too much to take the place of a human approach to human children. The whole education racket is put under a large lense microscope. "It is time for the pendulum to swing back to a sane use of files and records, and to give some genuine guidance to the children behind our doors." . . . PRO PELLE CUTEM, by Michael Lynch, is a charming essay tracing the slogan of the Hudson Bay Company from the romantic stations of "the Company Trading into Hudson Bay" to the very antique Book of Job. The device "sparkles anew with the triple lights of intellectual wit, historic significance and primitive justice." . . . CHRISTIANS AND HINDU INDIA, by a Christian citizen of an Indian native state, throws light on the position into which Caste-Hindu officialdom believes the Christians should be relegated. In spite of the generosity of many native princes and of the influence of London, a surprising number of legal disabilities, supported by the old Hindu official traditions, still tend to keep Christians of the Hindu regions in the category of depressed classes.

Women with By-lines

Ladies of the Press, by Ishbel Ross. New York: Harper Brothers. $3.75.

ACCORDING to the last census there are 12,000 women writing for and editing newspapers in the United States. And not one of them, whether or not she is mentioned in "Ladies of the Press," by Ishbel Ross, will fail to applaud what this author has done to establish the status of women in journalism and to make the achievements of American newspaper women a matter of record. The book is an uncritical account of the performances of approximately 700 women who have achieved distinction as reporters and news commentators. It is a story of struggle and high adventure in a field completely dominated by men. It carries the reader from the time Horace Greeley made the initial gesture toward including them in the masculine domain of newspaper personnel by employing Margaret Fuller to do book reviews for the *Tribune* to the present, when women function as front-page reporters on practically every newspaper in the country. The New York *Times* is one exception. It is still "news" when a woman gets a by-line on page one of the *Times*.

Miss Ross divides the progress of women on newspapers during the past eighty years into four eras. First came the stunt period from 1890 to 1900, when women broke into the closed profession of journalism—not because they could write, but because they could and would pull stunts. The news they were permitted to report, they first had to create by self-exploitation. Nellie Bly of the New York *World* led the van when she girdled the globe in 72 days, 6 hours and 11 minutes, thus beating the record of Jules Verne's imaginary character. And a close second was Elizabeth Brough in San Francisco who justified her *nom de plume* of Helen Dare with a series of hair-raising exploits. From 1900 to 1910 was the sob-sister era, when women were sent out on sensational stories of violence and disaster, not to report the facts, but to play up human interest and record reactions. The term was coined at the Thaw trial, where the first sob sisters, Dorothy Dix, Ada Patterson, Nixola Greeley Smith and Winifred Black, covered the case from a woman's angle. During the suffrage era from 1910 to 1920 women in journalism, as in other professions, began to be recognized on the basis of work rather than sex and were classed as good or bad reporters and not as "women" reporters. About 1920, the tabloids ushered in a new technique and a new field of activity for women in which professional equality with men is unquestioned.

Men reporters with whom she covered every big news story for fourteen years, as well as hard-boiled editors who still believe that the city room is no place for a woman and that a newspaper would be better off without them, rate Ishbel Ross as the best newspaper woman in New York. So "Ladies of the Press" is a model of expert reporting. As a factual record—a compendium of case histories—exhaustively indexed, the book is invaluable for reference. But only in material is it encyclopedic. Written with the artistry and in the "lighter than air" style with

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which readers of Miss Ross's novels, "Promenade Deck," "Marriage in Gotham" and "Highland Twilight" are familiar, the mass of data, gleaned from the archives of the Congressional Library, from the files of old newspapers and from the women themselves, is transformed into a glamorous and absorbing story which reads like fiction. One doesn't need to be a newspaper woman to enjoy "Ladies of the Press." It is packed with interest and entertainment for the average reader.

While the author writes most authoritatively of her own colleagues and contemporaries who worked with her on the Hall-Mills case, the triumph of the Lindbergh flight and the tragedy of his child's kidnaping, the visit of the Prince of Wales, the Dempsey-Tunney prize-fight and other outstanding news stories of the decade, she also does full justice to the newspaper women who are no longer living, and to those who have made names for themselves in New England, on the Pacific Coast, in the South and in the Middle West and Northwest. Beside this classification there are chapters on foreign correspondents, columnists and editors of woman's pages whose stories add to the colorful panorama Miss Ross has created.

To meet interesting people is supposed to be the magnet which draws women into newspaper work. But one impression left by Ishbel Ross's book is that the ladies of the press are often more interesting than the people they contact.

Obviously there is no place for an account of the author's own career in such a book. But Stanley Walker, who was her city editor for several years on the New York *Herald Tribune,* pays her a glowing tribute of appreciation in the Foreword. Like so many ladies of the press, romance bloomed for Miss Ross inside the profession. She is the wife of Bruce Rae, whom she met while they were covering the Stillman divorce case for rival newspapers.

MARIE L. DARRACH.

Preaching the Social Gospel

New Faith for Old: An Autobiography, by Shailer Mathews. New York: The Macmillan Company. $3.00.

SHAILER MATHEWS is one of the most influential Protestant leaders of the past fifty years. The mere list of his activities occupies sixty lines in "Who's Who." He was dean of the Divinity School, University of Chicago, for twenty-five years, president of the Federal Council of Churches, editor of several magazines, author of nearly thirty books, ambassador of good-will in Japan from the Protestant Churches in America, delegate to the Stockholm Conference on Christian Life and Work and the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order, an ardent worker in the Church Peace Union and in the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches. For many years he traveled upward of 50,000 miles annually giving as many as 150 lectures a year.

Considering the number of comparatively insignificant people who write their memoirs, certainly Shailer Mathews was amply justified in publishing his autobiography. Yet he tells us in the preface that when the

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suggestion was made, he thought it highly "immodest to attribute such importance to his life." It is this inherent modesty that makes him such an attractive character and gives a delightful charm to his autobiography. "In all my contacts," he writes, "I have never found anyone who was not my superior in some activity." One is not surprised when he adds: "Such a discovery made for friendships," for who can one help liking a man who modestly admits one's superiority.

Perhaps the two movements in Protestantism in which Dean Mathews' personal achievements counted for most were the reconciliation of religion and science, and the application of religion to social and economic problems. Seven of his books deal with the social gospel. Because of his activities in this field he "had the distinction of being called a member of a trinity, the other two *personae* being the Pope and the devil"! Given the becoming modesty of the author, this volume is naturally a sketch of the movements with which he was connected rather than a detailed biography. And although more interesting to Protestants than to Catholics, there are many things in it that it is good for Catholics to know. We need cooperation in emphasizing the basic moral ideas of religion for only united combat against the evils of today can be successful. Shailer Mathew's experience in getting unity of action from those of different theologies but substantially identical moral purposes is encouraging to everyone. "The way to get together," as he says, "is to work together."

J. Elliot Ross.

A Reporter Travels

Return to Malaya, by R. H. Bruce Lockhart. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. $3.00.

WEARYING of the humdrum routine of Fleet Street, Mr. Lockhart "wangled" three months' leave and, to paraphrase his own words, with a lilt in his step and a fierce exultation in his heart, took ship to Malaya which he had left a quarter of a century earlier. The result is an entertaining and informative book, albeit somewhat egoistical, a suave blend of serious observation, light chit-chat and local color. It is the Catholic Book of the Month Club choice for January.

He observed great changes: the white man has lost prestige, the native has made tremendous educational strides, and Japan looms on the eastern frontier. White imperialism in Indonesia has four faces, Dutch, French, British and American; and its problems are triple, an economic slump, a growing nationalism and the challenge of Japanese imperialism. None of these have been solved. England has made Singapore a modern Gibraltar, and the Dutch rely upon British power for their ultimate protection in the east. But the Dutch Governor-General pointed to the narrows of the Siamese Isthmus and remarked that Japan would soon obtain a concession and cut a canal, thereby rendering Singapore obsolete. No one on the spot believes that the United States will quit the Philippines. Apropos of the German colonial question one high official made this statement, "Self-determination is moving

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so fast that in twenty-five years' time it will make no difference who owns colonies." However, the ex-British agent considers internal unrest a more serious danger than external aggression. Events have moved rapidly in the last twenty-five years and are gathering momentum.

These serious reflections are embedded in an engaging travel book and need not frighten readers who seek relaxation rather than problems. The book serves Jack Spratt and his wife. The author eschewed official guides and employed Malay and Javanese chauffeurs, he went into all the out-of-the-way places, and writes vividly of native scenes and customs. Seremban, Sumatra, Java and the Celebes are terra incognita for most of us; thus we can turn to the end papers, on which his itinerary is traced, with anticipation, and are not disappointed in the text. Mr. Lockhart is a good reporter with a light touch, he has tried hard to be objective and has in great measure succeeded, it is a book for all tastes. Of course there is much of the personal in it, and the little wooden slippers which were featured in "British Agent" reappear.

BRYAN M. O'REILLY.

Literati

Portraits and Self-Portraits; collected and illustrated by Georges Schreiber. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.75.

THE FORMULA for this book, pictures of public figures accompanied by autobiographies, would seem sure-fire, except that one could hardly imagine seeing it properly carried out. One would not expect the forty authors pictured here to collaborate with genuine autobiographies, or, at least, one would expect many of them to conceal themselves by modest or clever tricks, and thus to make the book a great disappointment. Surprisingly, however, and luckily, in this case the formula worked well. The Schreiber drawings, not great artistic masterpieces, based on surface contours rather than structural planes, and leaving the souls undisturbed if any were particularly strained, are still very pleasant introductions, portraits drawn perfectly well showing what the subjects look like. The writers' self-portraits, within their few lines, or few pages at most, nearly every one manage to give a real characterization. With unexpected regularity the famous people turn out to be just about what you would expect them to be.

Because it really is a book of portraits and self-portraits, it would be indecent to review it too closely. The French writers are remarkably handsome. The British enormously suave. The Marxists seem definitely underdeveloped. In a short paragraph Albert Einstein proves himself also a great autobiographer. Thomas Mann is wonderfully Olympian. Ernest Hemingway likes shooting. The book is a primarily interesting book—nearly cute. In that it is very successful. Considered as the group portrait of forty of the most famous writing men in the world—forty of our seers—it is not so entertaining. Some of them sound noble enough, but the general sound is not as noble as one might hope.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

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Butler Revised

Butler's Lives of the Saints: Volume V, May, edited by Herbert Thurston, S.J., and Norah Leeson; Volume X, October, edited by Herbert Thurston, S.J., and Donald Attwater. New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons. $2.75 per volume.

THESE latest volumes of Father Thurston's revision of Alban Butler, compiled in collaboration with the same scholars who worked on the earlier ones, maintain the high standard of the series. Their treatment of legends more venerable than trustworthy is likely to arouse criticism in some quarters, which criticism will be as undeserved as it has been hitherto, since there is no unreasonable scepticism, and to foster piety by credulity is to play into the hands of the enemy. The notices of sources and other bibliographical material will be of great value to those interested in any particular saint. In reading of the martyr's torments, not only those which may have been exaggerated, but those which, notably in England, are completely historical, one would have found it difficult, a few years ago, to credit such cruelty. Now one is overwhelmed by the realization that "it can happen," if not, please God, "here," at least "now," above all in Spain, where countless men and women are being added to the matyrologies of future times. And this is the most glorious aspect of the fact that though the present work lacks only three volumes, the lives of the Saints can never be completed while time lasts.

Mother Nature

Through the Woods, by H. E. Bates; with engravings by Agnes Miller Parker. New York: The Macmillan Company. $3.00.

MISS PARKER'S wood-cuts are compositions, after the sound traditions of old masters in this art. But they also have a modern flare and finish, so that some—notably "Catkins of Hazel and Willow"—almost suffice to convey to some hypothetical future time the quality of early twentieth-century appreciation of nature. There are seventy-three of them in all, decidedly worth cherishing. Mr. Bates supplies an accompanying text which is very much more than a few obbligato chords. It comes, or seems to, from moods of long standing and poetic gravity.

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